

GRANT



AS A



SOLDIER



Class E 672

Book A 37

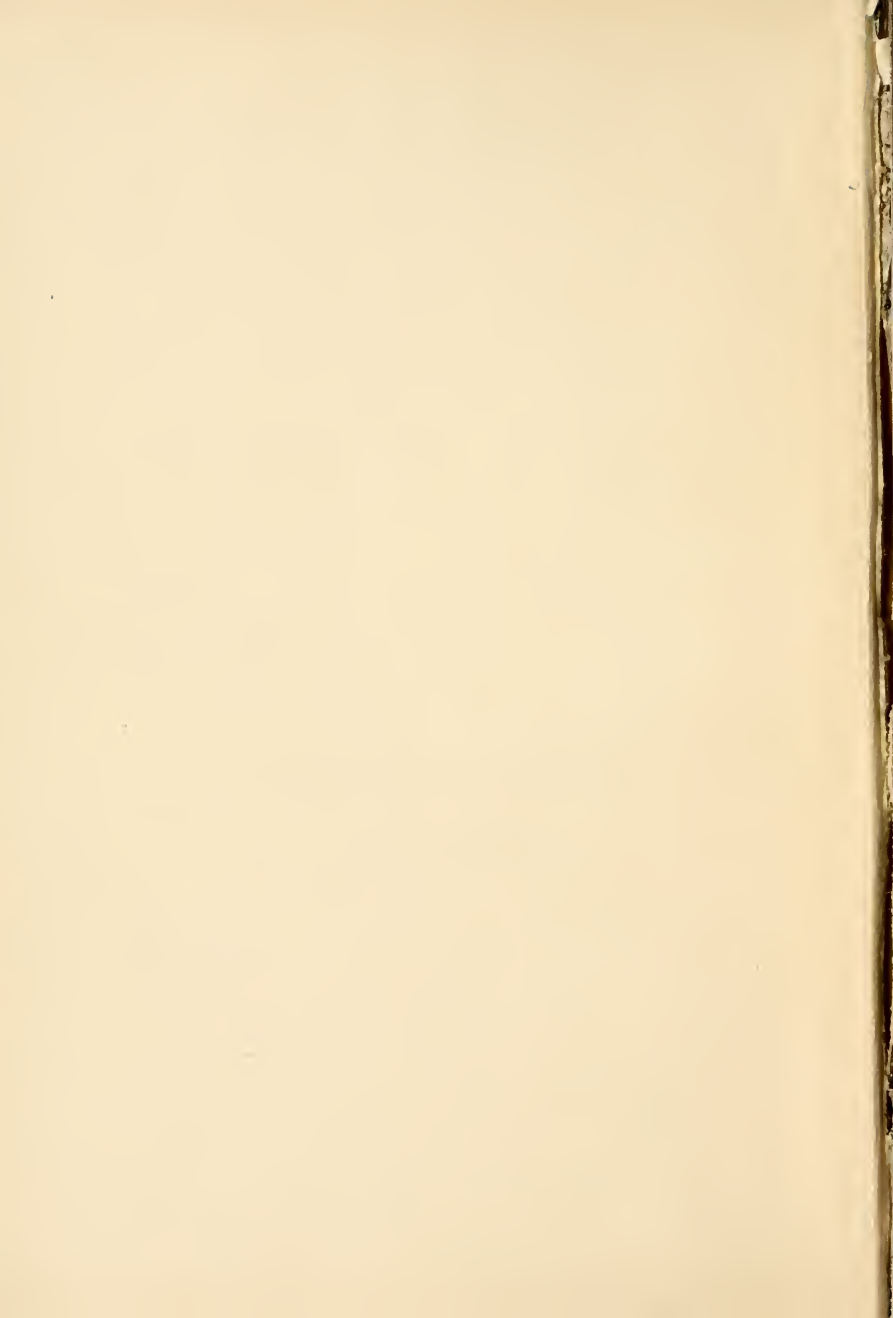
Copyright N<sup>o</sup> 4412

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.









# GRANT

AS A

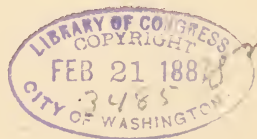
# SOLDIER.

BY

AUGUSTUS W. ALEXANDER,

"

OF THE ST. LOUIS BAR.



ST. LOUIS:  
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.  
1887.

E 675

A 37

Copy 2

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1887, by  
AUGUSTUS W. ALEXANDER,  
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

*Press of Nicolson-Jones Printing Co.,  
210-212 Pine Street, St. Louis, Mo.*





Condemnation must sometimes have a look of partisan harshness. For the facts related I must not be blamed. I did not make them. Undertaking the task of relating them, I must aim to relate them truly.

As this little book is meant to be history and not mere annals, not bald narrative of facts and detailed descriptions of battles, no maps of battles are given.

If an author's prepossessions are worth being stated, I may say that in 1860 I was of the Republican party and supported Mr. Lincoln at the hustings and was afterward an ardent Union man.

A. W. A.

ST. LOUIS, February, 1887.

# GRANT AS A SOLDIER.

---

## THE MILITARY ART.

---

The reign of brute force is inferior in rank to the reign of intellect. Yet in barbarous and semi-barbarous times the reign of brute force is and must be dominant. In barbarous and semi-barbarous times every difference becomes a quarrel, and between parties of regnant rank every quarrel brings war. In such times the one road to distinction is by success in war. And every quality that specially fits a man for war is held in esteem. The Romans were a warlike, a conquering people. Hence they esteemed valor above all else. The Latin word *virtus*, meaning primarily *manliness*, had for its first meaning among the Romans, valor, on the idea that valor is the highest quality of a man's character, the great virtue.

It is among savage nations that we see the true nature of war and the qualities of him who achieves distinction. Muscle and prowess in arms bring con-

sideration just as they do with the non-intellectual classes in civilized peoples. Note the cases of Goliath and Samson. In one savage tribe a man was forbidden to marry till he owned the skull of a slain enemy. The possession of several such skulls gave him rank among the nobility. Such is the nobility of savagery, of a warlike people. Where savagery prevails, there is the reign of brute force; there high intellectual or moral worth, unconnected with physical prowess, is held for naught; there the warrior is the great man and only through war lies the road to distinction. Brute force and intellect are in antagonism and the military profession is appropriately and of necessity the most unbookish and most unintellectual of the professions. It is only by courtesy that it can be called a profession.

Great mind is not needed and in fact cannot be used in its practice. Some tasks require the mightiest intellect. He who would discover the deepest truths and the most occult relations of facts and would thence, by impregnable logic, deduce other deepest truths and other occult relations of facts, needs the endowment of Kant, of Newton, of Spencer. In the midst of his course of lectures Fichte talked the language of a philosopher when he began a lecture by saying: "We have now reached a point, gentlemen, where we are prepared to make God." But the mind required, in Fichte's sense, to make God, is not needed and cannot be fully used in

shoeing a horse. The strength of a giant is no better than that of a school girl for darning a sock. To order Smith forward at Donelson needed no intellectual greatness.

Ignorance in the military profession is almost a necessity. In some at least of the other professions study is a necessity. The young lawyer, though having few cases, has cases enough. On a single case he studies, with laborious care, a whole book, perhaps more than one book. He may spend weeks of toilsome reading in preparing to draft one instrument of writing. Thus two or three years of his earlier professional life are passed. But even after he has become a learned lawyer and throughout his professional career he may spend days in investigating the books on a single case or a single opinion. The editor must read daily to keep abreast of the times, to keep himself acquainted with new questions, new facts, new theories. The physician who neglects new developments in science soon becomes incapable. The professor, if he would achieve eminence, must burn the midnight oil. In short, intellectual wealth of whatever sort can be got only by patient, long continued intellectual toil. The professional duties of these classes exact study. With the military profession it is not so. The cadet at graduation from West Point, made second Lieutenant, is perhaps sent to some military post. A few weeks serve to acquaint with his brother

officers, with his monotonous routine of daily duties and with the mode of filling blanks. After that, apart from his hour of routine duty, irksome because always the same, he with his brother officers have an unceasing variety of intellectual toil, that is to say, yesterday it was cards, whisky and cigars; but to-day it is whisky, cards and cigars, and to-morrow it will be cigars, whisky and cards. By courtesy this may be called a profession, but it is a profession in which there can be no intellectual growth.

We have considered the profession of arms only in time of peace. In war it is still worse. In time of peace there is no requirement of study, no incentive to study, and hence, as a rule, no study. But there is at least leisure and quiet for study. In war even these are wanting. In war the camp is the home of excitement, of idleness, except when on duty, and of dissipation. No officer has composure of mind or opportunity for much severe reading. On the march the case is still worse. A profession whose duties necessitate the study of books will produce occasionally a great intellect. But a profession which does not necessitate such study, which in fact discourages and almost forbids such study, must furnish starved and stunted minds. When Gen. Winfield Scott visited Europe, his position as head of the United States Army procured him attention from distinguished military officers.

The Marshals of Napoleon, whose fame filled the world, he found to be, with one exception, men of only average mind, uninformed and common.

Among ancient peoples of considerable advancement in the dubious sort of civilization then prevalent, men who displayed intellect in vocations really intellectual, still sought military fame. Hannibal, a man of commanding intellect and inheriting civic distinction, led the Carthaginian army in the battle of Trebia, Thrasymenus and Cannae. Julius Cæsar, a politician as able as he was knavish and as a historic writer hardly surpassed, was also one of the first military leaders of the world. Nor was the case different in Greece. Solon, the law-giver, was a soldier; Pericles, the first Athenian statesman, and Themistocles, but for his trickery probably the second, were soldiers. Thucydides, Xenophon and Polybius, now known only as historians, were soldiers. Epaminondas, in command of the Bœotian army gained the decisive victory of Leuctra, and also by his wisdom in statesmanship, aided by the influence acquired by his purity of life, brought Thebes to rank among the first States in Greece.

There was, probably, one decisive reason for the intellectual ability which marked military leaders in those days in the fact that military discipline was then feeble and it followed that, except in the case of a hereditary king, born with absolute authority, like Xerxes and Alexander, only a

man of commanding intellect could get, and having got, continue to hold, military leadership. Under our rigorous modern discipline and methods it is otherwise. By appointment a Pope, a Burnside, a Hooker, may get command of fifty thousand men and may hold the command until, for the disasters and slaughters his follies have caused, he is removed, not by an uprising of his soldiers, but by another appointment. In ancient times to be skillful in war meant not merely ability to issue orders, an art in which the weakest general is usually most proficient. It meant infinitely more. It meant ability to gain, and then to maintain, leadership among men. It involved capacity to lead in civil as well as military life, that is, it involved intellectual ability. Hence men of strong intellect and of ambition, devoted themselves in time of peace to intellectual pursuits and thus became intellectually great. Then seeing that through war lay the shortest road to fame, they adopted war as soon as occasion offered and won leadership. In all-conquering Rome, sending her legions now to the Ganges and now to the Thames, and applauding valor as *par excellence* the virtue, it was natural that men of learning and intellect should seek fame by the quickest route.

During the Middle Ages, and to the sixteenth century, if we except the vocation of the priesthood and that of the medicine man, two vocations often united, war afforded the only field of intellec-



tual activity. Hence the absorbing desire for war, and hence its constancy. During brief intervals of peace the fooleries of chivalry were in vogue. But as ignorance gave way to enlightenment, other modes of employment, other avenues to distinction, were found, more quiet, more intellectual and more dignified than devastating farms, burning towns and butchering men. Commerce, navigation, mechanic arts, letters, philosophy and the learned professions sprang up. In fact, war lost its charms. Its perils, its distractions, its temptations, its vices, the toils and exposures and sufferings of the march, the demoralization of the camp, — these ceased to be attractive. Then it came to pass that the man of affluence sent his brightest son to the bar and his dullest to the church or to the army. The profession of arms lost its luster. It now ranks below all the others, and has ceased to be an intellectual profession. It can be called a profession only by courtesy. During the past fifty years nearly every profession has added to the world's stock of ideas. The profession of arms has contributed not one thought. It has contributed narratives in abundance, but not one thought. In the prosecution of war, to be sure, new applications of ideas and new observations have been made in engineering and in surgery, but these were contributions of the engineering and medical professions. A profession

which is barred from books cannot possess intellectual greatness.

In a vocation so completely practical it is clear that a technical education can have but little value, and that experience must be the great instructor. Accordingly we find that few of our best generals were technically educated. The ablest general of modern times, Frederick the Great, had no technical education. Marlborough, probably the next best, had almost no education at all. Napoleon had none to speak of. He entered Brienne a boy of ten, and entered the army at sixteen. The mathematics of his day was quite limited, but especially its principles and demonstrations were too abstruse and obscure to be within the comprehension of a juvenile mind. Of Napoleon's marshals Massena, the best, was illiterate; Ney and Murat were not much better. Blücher, the Prussian general, was illiterate. Undeniably education, of whatever sort is of value to any man, whatever his vocation. But we speak now not of a general education, but of an education technically and exclusively military, as we might speak of a medical or legal education.

Of the education given at West Point and other military schools but a very small fraction is military. Davies' algebra is not more military when taught at West Point Academy than when taught at any other academy in America. The study of French is not

more military there than at a female seminary. Engineering is taught there, but is also taught at a thousand other schools. Besides, though engineering may be of special advantage, just as a knowledge of meteorology might be and undoubtedly would be of advantage, yet a knowledge of engineering does not make a good general, nor does a man need to be an engineer in order to be a good general. A general leaves engineering to his chief engineer just as he leaves hospital management to his medical director. Nearly all the studies taught at West Point are taught elsewhere. Hence, though they are education, they are no more to be reckoned as military than as legal or medical education.

The few things which constitute education strictly military could be learned in not many months, and besides are, for the most part, of a character that cannot be taught from a professor's chair, and can be learned only by experience. The first branch in the military curriculum is called *logistics*, which has to do with the details of supplying and moving an army. Obviously logistics is mere business. Like any other sort of business, it is to be learned only by doing it. The gray-haired professor himself, if put into the field to manage the logistics of an army, would be lost. But a sprightly commission merchant's clerk will excel, I do not say all the cadets that will be graduated next year, but ninety-nine out of a hundred of army officers. Logistics cannot be

taught from the professor's chair, and it may be added, ought to be stricken from the curriculum.

Tactics comes next. Tactics is of two sorts, elementary tactics and grand tactics. Elementary tactics, the evolutions taught to the private soldier, though useful, is so simple that it may be learned in a few weeks by the commonest mind. Any system not thus simple would be unfit for the low grade of intellect sometimes found among men who are good private soldiers. To learn the military drill is next to nothing. The dancing master's art is of much higher rank. The drill master teaches evolution merely; the dancing master teaches evolution, but in addition he teaches grace. His art is coupled with refinement and involves the poetry of motion. How far apart the heels must be and at what angle the feet must be placed at the command "attention," how to execute the command "shoulder arms," "about face," "by the left flank, march,"—to learn all this does not invigorate the mind. Though of essential value to a company officer, a mere general knowledge of elementary tactics is sufficient for any officer above the rank of colonel. There was not a corporal at Leuthen who was not superior to Frederick as a drill master. Elementary tactics can be either learned or taught by the commonest mind; it is a purely muscular, that is, a totally unintellectual art; it can be learned in camp or elsewhere in a few weeks under a sergeant's instruction and it

is hence deceptive to apply to it the word education.

Grand tactics, the placing and maneuvering a large body of men in presence of the enemy, requires something of skill, yet from its character it is manifest that not much can be taught in the recitation room. The placing and maneuvering of an army on the battlefield depends on the topography of the battlefield and on the placing and maneuvering of the opposing army. Relative strength of the armies and advantages of position determine everything. Melas at Marengo could not cross the intervening creek because of the steepness of its banks and hence had to send a heavy detachment up the creek for a crossing. He crossed and drove back the French. Marlborough at Blenheim was able with some difficulty to cross the intervening creek and attack Tallard's center. For such cases what good can the instruction of the recitation room do? Nay, of what need is such instruction? Did Melas at Marengo need to be told by a professor that steep banks obstruct? Would any education have rendered the illiterate Marlborough more able to decide that his troops can cross the little creek and attack the enemy's center? The topography of a battle field is a big fact and no two battlefields are alike, and no professor of grand tactics can anticipate the topography of a field. The hill, the ravine, the forest, the hedge, the swamp, the group of hay-

stacks, the forest on fire, the pond, the house, the village, the river or creek, the impassable gully, these are as much military facts as the brigades and batteries of the enemy, and not seldom decide battles. But for Hougomont, Wellington would have lost Waterloo. But for those deceptive fish ponds at Prague, Frederick would have annihilated his foe. It was the impassable Plauen chasm at Dresden that enabled Napoleon to mass on Schwartzberg's left, unable on account of the chasm to be reinforced, and to destroy it and then to gain a victory. Who could control the fire in the woods at the Wilderness? Joe Johnston's position at Kennesaw Mountain and Bragg's position at Missionary Ridge made the attacks on them by Sherman and Grant respectively such as history must condemn. From the nature of the case it is evident that the most learned lectures of the professor's room can not communicate skill in grand tactics.

It is further to be remarked that much of the discretion and skill displayed on a battlefield rests not with the commanding general, but with officers of a lower and, perhaps, much lower grade. It belongs probably not to a corps commander, nor even a division commander, nor yet a brigade commander, but to a colonel to see and seize lucky defenses, an embankment, a group of farm buildings, an excavation for concealment, the flank afforded by a swamp or deep creek, a prominence

for artillery. More than one battle has been gained by a brigadier-general. Kellerman won Marengo. It was Grouchy's skill that for hours withstood Benningsen at Friedland. The general commanding is usually too remote to be able to know with particularity the topography of the battlefield. Between him and the most of his army there are probably hills and forests and villages. How could Napoleon observe his entire line at Wagram, about seven miles long, or at Lützen, involving several villages? How could Grant observe his line at the Wilderness through an impenetrable forest? Even if Grant during the battle of Fort Donelson had been at his post of duty, he could have witnessed in that hilly and wooded region no part of the engagement. His duty would have been simply to send aid to McClernand who fought the battle and to order Smith and Wallace to attack early in the forenoon. In fact, a good commanding general makes few orders. He chiefly leaves to the corps commander to manage his corps, who chiefly leaves to the division commander to manage his division, who chiefly leaves to the brigade commander to manage his brigade, who chiefly leaves to the regimental commander to manage his regiment. The best commanding general is least given to intermeddling. From the foregoing it appears first, that a commanding general needs not much besides good sense, secondly, that most of the skill to be exercised in seeing

and seizing advantages must belong to subordinates, and thirdly, that from its nature grand tactics can not be taught to any mind however mature, but especially cannot be taught to boys. Military genius is a phrase belonging only to rhetoricians.

The same is true of strategy, the maneuvering of an army not in presence of the enemy or in Jomini's phrase, "fighting a war on the map." The rules of strategy are few and simple. But this, too, is one of the cases in which, coming to practice, rules are well nigh valueless. The strategy of no two wars can be alike. How could Napoleon's strategy of the Spanish campaign resemble that of the Russian campaign? Nay, take wars waged in the same territory and their strategy may differ essentially. The strategy of Napoleon's first Italian campaign is totally unlike that of the Marengo campaign. That of the Austrian campaign, which began with the capture of Ulm, is totally unlike that which ended with Wagram. That of the Prussian campaign, which began with Jena, is unlike that which ended at Leipsic. In strategy, as in grand tactics, every good general adjusts his movements to those of his adversary, and there is no general who does not make mistakes and thus justify an opposing strategy which, but for the mistake, would be bad. Frederick the Great, an uncommonly good strategist, made mistakes. Napoleon's strategy was often wretched. In his



Marengo campaign, though in some respects admirable, it was in some respects bad ; and but for two accidents, neither of which could be foreseen, must have been fatally bad. His last Prussian campaign was miserably bad. With one splendid exception, his campaign in France in 1814 was in part only tolerable and in part bad. His Russian campaign was a blunder from beginning to end. He left nearly a continent of hostile countries in his rear. True, they were diplomatic friends, but sometimes diplomatic friendship is nothing. He who pledges you friendship with your knife at his throat may experience a change of heart when he finds his knife at your throat. Blücher's retreat to Wavre from his defeat at Ligny was a blunder. It is a strategic rule, because a rule of good sense, that a defeated general should retreat upon his re-enforcements, if he has them. Thus he gains additional strength. Now, Wellington and Blücher were re-enforcements each of the other. Blücher retreated northward upon Wavre and thus imperiled Wellington. Indeed, but for the accident of a heavy rain on Saturday, which Blücher could not have foreseen, causing a delay on Sunday of six hours in delivering battle, Napoleon would have destroyed Wellington, at Waterloo, before Blücher's arrival. But if Blücher after Ligny had retreated, not northward upon Wavre but westward, a distance of hardly more than five miles, upon Wellington

as his re-enforcement, the two armies would have been at once united and Napoleon's plan of fighting them separately been balked. From all these illustrations of strategy it is clear that a professor can lay down no rigid rules of guidance. It is even true that the rules which control one general may be inapplicable to his adversary. For example, a general invading the enemy's country must exercise a vigilance of which his adversary is relieved. The inhabitants, friendly to his adversary, will make haste to convey to the invaded the movements of the invader, but will carefully conceal or perhaps misrepresent to their enemies the movements of their friends. The invading general, too, must take care to keep his army compact and prepared every hour for an attack. He must daily reconnoitre and adopt other appropriate methods to prevent surprise. It was to an amazing neglect of these precautions that Grant owed his defeat at Shiloh. The season of the year, too, is sometimes to be considered. A march that could properly be undertaken in summer or fall may be made impracticable in late winter by mud and swollen streams. Napoleon had thousands of men disabled by his foolish march from Dresden to Düben. Again, the question of the health of the army is vitally important. Many a military enterprise has failed through disregard of it. Grant's persistence, notwithstanding successive failures, in his amphibious siege of Vicksburg,

while he was daily filling the Mississippi levees with the bodies of his dead soldiers, must be condemned. Armies are not created to be buried needlessly. From the foregoing view of the subject of strategy it is apparent that its rules are so manifestly dictated by good sense, and are of such sort that he who is capable of being a general, need not have heard them taught from a professor's chair, and that he who is incapable will not be profited by such teaching. At any rate, when we consider the character, the multitude, and the infinite complications of the questions involved in strategy, such as the friendliness or unfriendliness of other governments, differences in climate, bases of supplies, capacity of the invaded country to subsist an army, salubrity, the hot hate or the lukewarmness, or possibly the sympathy of the invaded people, the season of the year, the topography of the country, and the condition of its roads, the *morale* of each army and the ability and temperament of the opposing general, whether venturesome like Blücher and Hood, or cautious like Wellington and McClellan, it is clear that we are dealing with topics not only insusceptible of being taught by a professor, but quite too big for the immature minds of school boys.

In a school grand tactics and strategy can be taught only by general rules. But in the first place, general rules on those subjects cannot be comprehended by a boy, and in the second place, in the case of boy

or man, if he stops with general rules, they become valueless. To make general rules valuable, the student must proceed at once to the study of extensive treatises in which these rules are elaborated and then to histories of military campaigns, where the rules are applied. When for example, he has familiarized himself with Ziethen's skillful retreat the day before Ligny and of Grouchy's masterly rescue of his army from Wavre the day after Waterloo, he begins to understand how to handle an army in retreat. If Grant had acquainted himself with Napoleon's management after Jena and elsewhere, and of Blücher's management after Waterloo, he would have pursued the enemy the second day of Shiloh, and would thus, in some sense, have atoned for his defeat the first day, would have made the final result yield something instead of nothing. By such reading and not otherwise, can a man become a military critic. But even such reading, even capacity as a military critic, will not fit him for command. For that duty only actual experience in campaign and in battle will suffice. The mere critic will often encounter questions, chiefly of the lower grade, on which he declines to form an opinion. The higher questions of vegetable growth, the professor of botany understands better than the gardener; but on some questions he defers to the gardener. It is amusing to observe the affectation of modesty, thinly veiling an oracular dogmatism,

with which generals who have not read a military book in twenty years justify or condemn a military act. It is often more amusing to observe the profound satisfaction with which ninety-nine men out of a hundred, accept such *dictum* as decisive — men who, if a gardener should presumptuously undertake to talk above his spade, to talk botanical science, would say: “Let the cobbler stick to his last.” Jomini was both critic and field marshal. Probably Von Moltke is. The War of the Rebellion presented few critics and even not many field marshals. But unless the field marshal is also a critic he must not claim to have a military education. We conclude then, that mathematics, French, Spanish, etc., though good as parts of a general education, are in no sense parts of a mere military education, that of those things which might be held to constitute a military education, elementary tactics belongs to a camp or school of instruction, and is too trivial and too muscular to be considered under the name education, that logistics cannot be taught at school, and that grand tactics and strategy are to be learned chiefly by experience in campaigns and by general military reading and are of such complexity of character that it is a waste of time to teach them to boys.

There are, however, two advantages in having received a so-called military education. First, there

will be in a military institution a military *esprit du corps*. A boy remaining there a few years will be apt to become imbued with the military spirit. Afterward, when he comes to engage in war, he will instinctively avoid certain unmilitary acts which a volunteer officer in his zealous rage might commit. For example, he will disdain to maltreat prisoners of war; he will disdain to poison wells and the like. Yet this rule has had conspicuous and discreditable exceptions. During the late war West Pointers took a savage delight in destroying private property, in burning towns, and in causing wanton misery to non-combatants. Grant cruelly forbade an exchange of prisoners and humanity wept at his cruelty.

Another advantage is that the public and the army, forgetting that their West Point commander dropped military studies when he left the Academy ten or twenty years before, and has forgotten everything, insist on believing, first, that as an Academy boy he learned everything about war, and, secondly, that he remembers all he then learned. Now, this belief, however absurd, is a big fact. Under a republican form of government public opinion is a power. The support it gives to a general is immensely valuable. Again, the soldiers have special confidence in a West Pointer. The confidence of an army in a general, whether misplaced or not, is also a big fact. A loss of confidence brings demoralization. But soldiers will make toilsome

marches and endure exposures cheerfully and will fight fiercely under a leader whom, for however unsound a reason, they regard with favor.

But there are some peculiarities connected with the relation between the so-called military education and the military art which deserve notice. When a young lawyer has just graduated, the best that an old and intelligent lawyer will say of him is, not that he knows the science of law, but that he knows such an amount of that science as will enable him *to find* the law of any case presented to him. The practice of his profession involves study of the law of each case that he gets. Note well that with him the practice of his profession consists in daily acquiring more of the learning of his profession and daily applying that learning. With the young lieutenant it is different. I speak now only of West Point graduates whose scholarship was poor, not of those whose scholarship was excellent and who are usually put at once into the profession of engineering. Even if the lieutenant at a military post practices elementary tactics it is a thing of which he cannot learn more. Of the only real learning in his profession, grand tactics and strategy, he has no opportunity in time of peace to apply it. Hence, unlike the young lawyer, he is not daily gaining ground in his profession by a deeper ascertainment of its principles and a daily application of them. Instead of daily applying in

practice the principles of grand tactics and strategy, and by special reading on each question, daily increasing his professional learning in the practice of his profession, he has, in post duty, no more occasion for such application of principles and for such reading than if he were a jail guard. Here then is a wide difference between what would be called the practice of the profession of arms and the practice of any other profession. The latter implies constant professional gain; the former does not.

Again, this non-practice of the profession of arms not only means no professional gain, it means constant professional loss. Such is the infirmity of the memory that whatever there is no occasion to remember is soon forgotten. Of college graduates how many not engaged in teaching are able, ten years after graduation, to inflect the Latin verb *eo* or the Greek verb *erchomai*, or to expound and handle logarithms? The young law graduate, engaging in mercantile pursuits, will have forgotten everything of law in ten years. If we consider Gen. Grant's low class rank we may safely say, first, that the day he graduated he could not pass a creditable examination in the studies of his course, for he had never comprehended them; but, secondly, that ten years afterward he could not extract the cube root of an algebraic quantity nor distinguish a sine from a cosecant. Of what value then was his so-called military education in 1861? Of



the little of grand tactics and strategy that he knew when he left West Point he had forgotten all. He may have had military skill ; but he did not have it by reason of his education.

Yet again, he who engages in mercantile or kindred pursuits is, in his daily business, prosecuting a sort of education. True, it is an education of lower rank than that afforded by the practice of a profession, but it is valuable. In fact, in some respects, minor respects, it is more valuable than that afforded by professional practice. It necessitates a practical knowledge of men and things. It necessitates a constant vigilance, a constant wariness, a constant shrewdness, a constant being on the alert — in short, a constant exercise of qualities not exercised at all just prior to Shiloh. The practical judgment of the business man is being constantly exercised and cultivated. Selfishness stimulates him to a proper balancing of caution and daring. The world's great polytechnic is a good school. From this school the military officer in peace is excluded. He needs not be watchful for another bargain ; he needs not invent modes of attracting trade ; he needs not look up a man to buy a batch of stock or a piece of real estate, to loan money or borrow money ; he needs not think ; he needs not be wary ; he needs not venture nor avoid venturing ; he needs not calculate the future of markets and the probabilities of success and risks of failure. He

discharges daily his hour of routine duty in filling blanks and other irksome work, and then, unless he is found drunk on duty, his salary is sure for life, and he will surely be promoted as older officers die. Inferior to other modes of professional life in cultivating mind and character, the military profession is also inferior to non-professional life. As a school to enrich and invigorate mind and develop character it is about equal to the business of a toll-gate keeper.

Though learning is necessary to make a military critic and is valuable to the field commander, history shows and reflection shows it is not a necessity to the latter. Any man of plain, good sense, who has had experience in handling troops and fighting battles could see as well as Gen. Joe Johnston that Kenesaw Mountain was impregnable, as well as Fitz John Porter that Malvern Hill was impregnable, as well as Hancock that Cemetery Ridge was strong, as well as Napoleon that to send Ney upon Wittgenstein's right flank at Bautzen would insure his defeat. Any man of plain, good sense can see that the effective occupancy of that cross-roads will bar the enemy's march by any of the roads; that a battery on you hill will drive the enemy from the plain in front; that a company may lie concealed in a sand pit, as at Waterloo, and play havoc with the advancing foe; that, as Stonewall Jackson saw at the second Bull Run, the railroad cut will make an

admirable defense; that a whole regiment can find protection behind those farm buildings and hay stacks; that if Floyd at Donelson massed on Grant's right it involved a thinning of his own right. It is manifest, first, that these things need not be taught by a professor, secondly, that in dealing with them there is no room for great intellect, and thirdly, that the seeing and using them belongs, in four cases out of five, to an officer of subordinate rank.

More than ninety per cent of war is mere business. True, it is military business and hence has its peculiarities. But that is true of every sort of business. The management of a dry goods store, the management of a real estate office, and the business management of a daily newspaper are unlike each other. But any man fit for business can learn either. And such a man can learn the business of war. It is less the intellectual than the moral qualities of the mind that determine fitness for military command. A good amount of courage and of firmness are needful. Especially there must be a proper balancing of qualities, as severity with clemency, caution with daring. The general needs above all a fair amount of that uncommon kind of sense called common sense. Though it must be admitted that during the war generals without it were placed in high rank.

On no subject has rhetoric played such mischiev-

ous tricks as on battles and military mind. As to battles the experience and testimony of a million of soldiers scattered through the country at the close of the war has done much to substitute prose for poetry. The behavior and utterances of hundreds who during the war bore the title of general have proved that neither learning nor intellect are necessary to military success. A battlefield is a very matter-of-fact affair. The stronger army, other things being equal, ought to prevail, for after all it is the soldiers who win victories. "God is on the side of the strong battalions." In a battle soldiers run rapidly across a field or plunge through a muddy branch, or scramble across a gully, or creep through a thicket, or dodge behind trees, or run swiftly up hills in face of a battery, the colonel, or even captain, often having more vital discretion than is possible to a higher officer. A battle is the severest of prose. Yet rhetoric has done its best to mystify, to invest it with romance, to represent it as a thing which only a superhuman mind is competent to direct and to impute its success to the transcendent genius, — genius is the word, — of the great commander. The false views of military talent which rhetoric delights to give are ludicrous. If a farmer, whose team becomes frightened, suddenly sees and instantly adopts a mode by which he checks it, if a real estate agent attempting to sell a house, discovers in a man seeking to purchase, a

prejudice, or preference, or lack of information on some point, and by prompt adroitness succeeds in driving a bargain, nobody sees any genius in the farmer who prevents a runaway, or in the agent who makes the trade. But if Napoleon at Ligny, observing by the hour, sees that Blücher's center is weak and that his reserves are exhausted and thereupon moves the Old Guard against it and breaks the line, a fact not requiring a tithe of the quickness of farmer or agent, and only the merest good sense, rhetoric begins to talk about "the quick eye of genius." At Waterloo, Blücher's cannon thundering in Napoleon's rear, about fifteen minutes after Ney's last repulse and when his force was flying in tumultuous confusion and terror, Wellington, a man of only fair capacity, saw that a general advance could not fail of success. In fact, Sir John Colborne had already been pushing forward for fully ten minutes. There was not a lieutenant in Wellington's army who could not see that a general advance was obviously the one thing to be done. Yet rhetoric says, "With one of those lofty inspirations of genius which belong only to mighty intellects," etc. So we read of Napoleon's "marble cheek," "marble brow," "his eye blazes with genius," "the fire of genius flashes from his eye," and so on *usque ad nauseam*. A general, by superior numbers, has been pressing the enemy back until it becomes clear that by advancing the corps on his extreme

left he will threaten the road in the enemy's rear, and thus compel his retreat. Rhetoric says grandiloquently: "Then the genius of the great commander blazed forth. Seizing the masses on his left in his Titanic grasp he hurled them with the resistless might of a giant against the lately insolent but now cowering foe, and victory was won." A plain man, content to talk sense, would say: "Taking the cigar from his mouth, the general ordered his left corps to advance and in less than an hour the enemy finding his way of retreat threatened, began to retire." It is safe to say that in no department of human activity has rhetoric been so perverse as in describing the military talent. Many battles have been lost by the commander's incompetency; but few have been won by the commander's skill.

The military character is not an enviable one. Character is shaped by circumstances. The circumstances surrounding a military officer are unfavorable. His position is an artificial one, that is, it is created and controlled by artificial laws. Under these laws he is subject to arbitrary authority, and in turn exercises arbitrary authority. Often compelled to accept commands harsh in character, and delivered with asperity of manner, he unconsciously learns to take revenge upon his subordinates for his own humiliation. Military life is a bad school for the formation of character and manners. Not a few

military officers think it fine to curse a subordinate. An officer learns, too, that a superior can assign duties to a favorite that are easy and without peril, and to one not a favorite, duties disagreeable and dangerous. It is not in human nature that sycophancy should not arise. But a vocation that invites sycophancy is bad for character. During the war we saw exhibitions of favoritism and of spleen that were disgraceful. In more than one instance we saw appointments and promotions not deserved. In more than one instance we saw officers of demonstrated skill, uncommon skill, absolutely driven from their profession without a hearing by the arbitrary caprice of a superior. Notably was this true in the cases of McClernand and Warren. It is as if a physician and surgeon who had attained high reputation in his profession should be, without a hearing, effectively prevented from practicing his profession by the will of one man. Whether such arbitrary authority is or is not necessary in the military service, is not now the question. Even assuming that it is, it remains true that to be subject to such authority must have a bad effect on character and to be invested with such authority must have a worse effect.

It may be answered that in civic life, too, there must be authority and obedience. But a moment's reflection will show that the cases differ essentially. The commission merchant is the superior of his ship-

ping clerk as the colonel of the captain. But there the analogy between the cases ends. The clerk can quit service whenever his superior's treatment becomes unendurable. The captain cannot. Again, the clerk, quitting, loses employment but he can get employment of another firm. But the United States is the only firm employing captains. To quit that firm is to quit his profession and begin life anew. Yet again, the colonel knows that he will not lose his captain. At any rate he would be immediately supplied with another captain. But the merchant may be unwilling to lose this clerk, who now understands perfectly the employer's business. Still further, if the merchant use language too harsh, the clerk, — such is the boldness in civic life, — may make on the spot a retort not quite welcome. The captain can take no such liberty. Hence, the merchant, though giving commands, yet takes good care to employ the language and tone of a gentleman. The colonel gives command according to his character. Occasionally a man who during the war held military rank and learned the military style, is elevated to civil rank. By his offensive pomp of authority he displays what among civilians is accounted a lack of good breeding.

The morals which the practice of the military art produces deserve to be noticed. War brings demoralization. Camp life brings dissipation. To be cut off from the genial and refining influences of



domestic life, from the society of ladies, from social commerce with neighbors and friends, rarely fails to produce looseness. During a campaign, occupation and use by sheer force, of private property, and sometimes its destruction, are often necessities. Hence there springs in the military mind a less delicate respect for private rights. A general orders a town to be burned or a region of country to be devastated without compunction, without shame. Arresting and detaining citizens, compelling them, with pistols at their heads, to be guides,—such acts tend to make military minds less tender of personal rights and to induce them to assert that maxim of barbarism, “*Inter arma leges silent.*” On the march the commissary department supplies the army with fresh beef and pork and officers affect ignorance. The general finds his table supplied with poultry and a full demijohn. He asks no questions, but compliments Sam, the colored man, as a purveyor. The large discretion which must in fairness be left to military officers in providing against necessary waste, loss, destruction and capture of government property, no allowance being made as against pillage, invites to corruption. The haste occasionally incident to a campaign affords opportunity to secrete. Close reckoning and critical inspection are often impracticable, sometimes impossible. With such opportunities and temptations, thieves steal, and men who would not be thieves

look away and afterwards accept gifts from the thieves. Considering human infirmity, it is too much to expect nice morals from the military profession.

It is but a step from the vices and crimes just named to falsehood. At the end of a battle a general rarely gives a full statement of his strength or of his casualties, but always overstates those of his enemy. If he is successful in a trifling skirmish he reports it as a battle. If he attacks a place, is whipped and driven off in hot haste, he reports that he made preparation without motive; went there by a sort of accident, and it was his previous purpose to quit it immediately. If he has a battle and is beaten, and the enemy defiantly awaits attack, while he makes haste to get away, he reports a victory. If the enemy plants himself in his road and baffles his further march, causing a retreat and complete deflection, his report ingeniously gives a false impression. If the enemy after defeat, retires in perfect order, and in fact without pursuit, he declares it "routed." Such are specimens of military veracity. The faithful military historian is constantly embarrassed by this foible of generals and especially hesitates to give definite numbers. Nothing is more certain than that a suppression of the truth is sometimes as immoral as an assertion of falsehood, or, in learned phrase, there may be no choice between *suppressio veri* and *expressio falsi*, for the suppression of a fact in a narrative may

deceive as effectively as an affirmative falsehood. But to the average military mind *suppressio veri* seems to be thought innocent. There are few military reports that can safely be believed. It is a delightful duty to add that some military officers do persist in keeping themselves clean. He who meets and triumphs over temptations greater and more frequent than those which the ordinary citizen encounters has a schooling which makes him the completest specimen of a gentleman.

There is no vocation in which skill is so little likely to get its just recognition as in the profession of arms. First, there is no vocation in which accident plays such freaks. A sudden rise in the Danube causing a destruction of the bridge, and thus cutting off French reinforcements, caused Napoleon's defeat at Aspern. The torrent of rain was the chief cause of McDonald's defeat by Blücher at Katzbach. The furious rain of Saturday afternoon inducing Napoleon to delay his attack Sunday morning till half past eleven o'clock, giving time for Blücher's arrival, caused the defeat of Waterloo. Panic, too, is a military accident. Why a sentiment springing from a slight cause, nay, sometimes from no real cause, shall suddenly spread with the speed of lightning and convert a brave army into a mob of crazed cowards is inexplicable. It is an accident which no skill of the general can foresee or prevent. Yet it has decided many battles. At Marengo Napoleon

had been beaten and driven back hour after hour and mile after mile when Desaix's division arrived and poured into the enemy's line a volley. At the same time and not by Napoleon's order, Kellerman, seizing the auspicious moment, dashed upon the Austrian flanks from among the grape vines, produced a panic and changed defeat into victory. At Kunersdorf, Frederick the Great thought he had won a victory, but about sundown a panic seized his troops and in sixty minutes they were scattered and for the time ceased to be an army. The incompetency of an opposing general may also be reckoned an accident? Accident wins victory and brings defeat. But when the result may be largely due to something else than skill, the best skill may fail and the poorest may succeed. Hence success cannot be a test of ability. It may be added that sometimes a blunder of a general is neutralized by a blunder of his adversary, sometimes too the weaker general makes the fewer blunders. In that ludicrous Comedy of Errors, the four days' Waterloo campaign, Blücher, the weakest of the three generals, made the fewest blunders, and Napoleon, perhaps the ablest of the three, made the most.

Another reason why, in the military profession, skill is so little likely to get its reward is the impossibility of unrestrained competition. Of two or more lawyers or carpenters in the same locality each succeeds according to his demonstrated merit. In

the military profession it is not so. In the same hard-fought battle, Smith, who commanded a regiment, was not a competitor of Jones, who commanded the army. However gallantly Smith may have led his troops, however vigilant in perceiving the movements of the enemy in his front, however prompt to seize good positions, though he may get credit for the management of a regiment, yet the credit of the victory goes to Jones. Nobody competed with Jones. It follows that though fifty other officers may have shown in the action equal ability, their ability is not to be considered in comparison with Jones'. From this peculiarity in the military service even the world at large cannot have the means of estimating the comparative merits of officers.

It is further to be remarked that high position is often got solely through personal friendship or political maneuvering. Buxhövden, through whose drunkenness chiefly the Russians lost Austerlitz, owed his military rank to a lucky marriage. In our own army a Pope, a Rosecrans, a Burnside, a Hooker got high rank. For these reasons skill fails of its proper reward. The world can estimate the carpenter or lawyer; it cannot estimate the soldier. Hence, to one it may render praise equally due to a hundred others. It must be added that the praise rendered to a successful general is always extravagant and irrational.

We conclude, then, that whatever the merit of the military character in ancient times, and afterwards in mediæval times, to-day the profession of arms is the lowest among the professions ; that military education goes for little ; that the profession as a rule are ignorant ; that the art is one requiring neither learning nor genius ; that while the military intellect is of the average sort only, military character and manners, formed under factitious and unfavorable circumstances, are not to be commended ; that it is impossible rightly to estimate military merit, and that the customary laudations are absurd.

## BELMONT.

---

It is my purpose to consider Gen. Ulysses S. Grant merely as a military leader. Hence, this book will contain no personal biography and no reference to his career subsequent to the close of the war. Nor is it worth while to trace his military career prior to his assumption of command of a military district. September 4, 1861, he established his headquarters at Cairo, Ill., in command of the District of Southeast Missouri, embracing all the district in Missouri south of St. Louis, together with Southern Illinois. His first act worthy of notice was the battle of Belmont.

Gen. Leonidas Polk, in command of a strong Confederate force, occupied Columbus, Ky., which is situated on a high bluff on the east bank of the Mississippi, and was well fortified. Grant had at least 20,000 men under his command. November 6 he gathered upon transport boats upward of 3,000 men, with sufficient artillery and two companies of cavalry, and sailed down the river toward Columbus, landing at a place called Hunter's Landing, just out of range of Polk's batteries, and on

the west bank. All that region is low and flat. Save a few cleared fields the land between Hunter's Landing and Belmont is heavily timbered and entirely level, with the exception of an occasional slough, at that time dry. Belmont consists of three shabby houses. It was occupied by a Confederate regiment under Col. Tappan and was surrounded by a heavy *abatis*, that is, trees felled in the direction from which an enemy would approach and with limbs pointed by the ax so as to embarrass the advance of an attacking party. Polk, seeing that Tappan was to be attacked, sent across re-enforcements under Gen. Pillow. Grant was still superior and drove the enemy before him. The low stage of the river made, under the bank, a narrow strip of its bed along the bank, bare and dry. Here Pillow's force took refuge. Here they were cooped and Grant ought at once to have headed them at such end of their line and captured every man. But he did not. The field being cleared, Grant's forces gave themselves up to an abandon of joy. They broke ranks. They rummaged Tappan's camp. They hurrahed. They sang songs. Officers harangued. They were not an army, but an armed mob. But Grant was opposed by a capable adversary. From his elevated position at Columbus Polk began to throw a plunging artillery fire. The Federal hilarity was checked. Soon a strong Confederate force was sent across and landed be-



tween Belmont and Hunter's Landing, thus intercepting the Federal retreat to the boats. Pillow's and Tappan's forces joined them. The demoralization of Grant's army was so complete that at first he was unable to restore order. He set fire to Tappan's camp and was then able to get his troops into line and immediately set out for his boats. He encountered the enemy and a bloody but indecisive combat occurred. At last Grant's command, in confusion, succeeded in boarding their boats, pursued by the enemy and fired upon until they were out of reach, badly beaten and with a loss in killed, wounded and missing of about 550. The battle of Belmont illustrates the Comedy of War. Grant with upward of 3,000 infantry and artillery and cavalry, had taken a steamboat excursion, had fought a battle with an outlying detachment of the enemy and beaten it, had three or four hours of jollification in sight of the enemy's main army, been whipped and scampered off with the enemy's bullets whistling through his ranks.

“The king of France with forty thousand men  
Marched up the hill and then — marched down again.”

The Southern people were elated beyond what the insignificant character of the affair justified. Davis made it the subject of a jubilant notice. The Northern people were correspondingly depressed. In this affair Gen. John A. McClernand first comes

into military notice. He commanded a brigade and fought with judgment and valor, having had three horses shot under him. When a young man McClernand had entered the legal profession. By steady devotion to business and to the study of the books he came to rank among the best lawyers in Illinois. At the outbreak of the rebellion he resigned his place in Congress, where he had been sent as a Democrat, entered the volunteer service, and was made brigadier-general. His strong mind was disciplined by the study of books, and it is hardly to be doubted that he found pleasure as well as duty in mastering the principles of the military art by patient study of military writers. Ambition, combined with patriotism, stimulated him to learn the profession of arms as he had learned the profession of law, and his daily connection with practical war facilitated the study of the books.

#### REFLECTIONS.

This affair defies military criticism. It was so ludicrous and its outcome so disastrous that Grant in his Personal Memoirs taxes his ingenuity to justify it, though with less skill than the case demands.

1. The first question is, what was the purpose of the steamboat excursion? Grant himself seems to say that there was no purpose, that it was a mere whim. He says: "I had no orders which contem-

plated an attack by the National troops, nor did I intend *anything of the kind* when I started out.”

2. The failure to make immediate capture of the Confederate force caged under the bank and to be had for the mere taking, was a blunder hardly to be excused in a second lieutenant.

3. Grant says that the Belmont battle disabled Polk from sending a force against Oglesby, who was somewhere on the St. Francis river. By what canon of military criticism he is able to assert that his own defeat disabled Polk, I am unable to say.

4. When he asserts that, “I had no orders which contemplated an attack by the National troops, nor did I intend anything of the kind when I started out,” that is, that he gathered an army of above 3,000 men, with artillery and cavalry and provisions, placed them on boats and started off without a purpose, he must not wonder if the assertion is not believed. They who think him dull, will after all place some limit to his dullness.

5. Grant says that at 2 a. m. of the 7th he received intelligence on which he “speedily resolved to attack Belmont, break up the camp and return.” He forgets that there is evidence over his own signature which flatly contradicts the statement, evidence in fact proving that before 2 a. m. of the 7th he had determined not only to capture Belmont but even to fix his headquarters there. Col. Richard J. Oglesby, in command of a force,

was somewhere in Southeast Missouri in the region of the St. Francis river, more than fifty miles west of Belmont. Col. Wallace was in command at Bird's Point, Mo. Grant wished to send an order to Oglesby, and hence sent it first to Wallace, directing him to forward it to Oglesby "by a messenger if practicable," seeming to suppose either that Wallace might know Oglesby's exact whereabouts or at least could find him. But the sending the dispatch to Wallace, the forwarding by Wallace by a small military force, or even "by a messenger if practicable," to Oglesby wherever he might be found in a woody, swampy and sparsely settled country, with few and tortuous roads, the march of Oglesby's column through such a country to New Madrid and the communicating from the nearest point of the march from which there is a road, to Grant at Belmont — all this would consume probably from five to eight days. It will be noted that the dispatch was sent from Cairo. It speaks for itself.

CAIRO, Nov. 6, 1861.

*Col. R. J. Oglesby, Commanding Expedition:*

On receipt of this, turn your column towards New Madrid. When you arrive at the nearest point to Columbus, from which there is a road to that place, communicate with me at Belmont.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Brigadier General.*

Grant should not have attempted to justify his Belmont folly. In doing so, he has made his case infinitely worse. He asserts that he got ready an army and set off without a purpose, an assertion which, in the first place, nobody will accept as true, and secondly, if it were accepted as true, it would convict him of even greater stupidity than that of attacking Belmont, as far as there is a greater and less in absolute stupidity. Besides he makes it possible to convict him, by his own dispatch, of a flat untruth.

## FORT HENRY.

---

The Confederates held as their northern line of defense Columbus, Ky., on the Mississippi, Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland, and further East, Bowling Green and Mill Spring. The Tennessee furnished good navigation as far as Muscle Shoals, in Alabama, and the Cumberland as far as Nashville. The capture of these forts would not only break the Confederate line, but would open a gateway to the cotton States by furnishing cheap and rapid transportation for troops and supplies. In January, in aid of a movement which resulted in the Federal victory of Mill Spring, Halleck ordered a reconnoissance of the Tennessee by Flag-officer Foote and Gen. C. F. Smith. These officers approached Fort Henry near enough to inspect its strength and approaches and to become satisfied that it could be easily captured, and they so reported to Halleck. Accordingly, February 1, Halleck ordered Grant to move against Fort Henry, and the expedition, attended by the gunboats, started on the 2d. McClelland, in command of perhaps eight or nine thousand troops in

transport boats convoyed by gunboats, was sent in advance. When these were landed far enough below — that is, north of the fort, to be out of range of its cannon, the transports returned to Paducah for the remainder of the 17,000 constituting Grant's command. On the 5th Grant returned with the remaining troops under command of C. F. Smith. Grant issued orders for an advance on the fort to begin at 11 a. m. on the 6th. The garrison of the Fort was less than 3,000, Gen. Lloyd Tilghman in command. Seeing that resistance against so overwhelming a force of army and gunboats was hopeless, Tilghman promptly sent his little army over to Fort Donelson, eleven miles distant. Himself and sixty cannoneers remained in the fort, to gain time, by a show of defense, for the escape of his army. Another fort called Fort Heiman had been constructed on the opposite side of the river from Henry. At 11 a. m. Foote with the gunboats set out to attack. At the same time Grant started C. F. Smith with a brigade to get into the rear of Fort Heiman. McClermand with the remainder of the army was to occupy the two roads leading from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson and Dover. Foote had urged Grant to start McClermand's troops earlier. Smith found Heiman unoccupied. Foote captured Fort Henry after a brief artillery resistance from Tilghman and his sixty cannoneers, and without any aid whatever from the

army. Meanwhile Tilghman's army effected its escape and reached Fort Donelson without molestation.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. A general should seek to strike his enemy in detail, but especially he should not permit a concentration when he can prevent it. Grant committed error in not adopting Foote's suggestion. Having landed his force, and thus apprised the enemy of the intended attack, he should then have pushed the beleaguerment. He should have started McClernand at dawn to occupy the Donelson and Dover roads. Thus, first, the capture of the fort, instead of being fruitless, would have yielded him nearly 3,000 prisoners; and, secondly, the enemy's force at Donelson would have been less by exactly that number.

2. The move upon Fort Henry must be reckoned a failure. Foote is entitled to no credit, since there was no real defense. Grant must be censured for having needlessly allowed the army to escape.



## FORT DONELSON.

---

February 12th, Grant started across the country to Fort Donelson. The transport boats and gunboats descended the Tennessee to ascend the Cumberland.

Fort Donelson was a strong position. The fort proper was built on high ground overlooking the river. Going up the river in a southerly direction, about a quarter of a mile before you reach the fort on your right you come to Hickman's creek, which at that time of copious rains was overflowing with back water. This creek completely guarded the fort from the north. For the most part the ground to the west and south of the fort was high, some of it perhaps a hundred feet above the level of the river. It was much broken. The petty village of Dover is situated nearly two miles south of the fort and between them there was another creek. At Hickman's creek, and about two miles west of the river there began a line of Confederate earthworks or rifle pits running in an irregular direction, to meet the exigencies of a very broken surface, for two miles or so in a southerly direction, and then bending to the

river so as to strike it about half a mile above, that is, south of Dover. Outside of this rifle pit was a wide abatis to embarrass the approach of an attacking force. Grant reached Fort Donelson with 15,000 men February 12th. The enemy's force was probably 17,000, though military men are so unreliable in certain classes of statement, that the careful historian must not be condemned for indulging often in conjecture where the reader thinks he has a right to something definite. Next day there was much cannonading and on Grant's right some sharp fighting, attended with some destruction of life. On the morning of the 14th, Flag Officer Foote, with his fleet of gunboats, arrived, as also transports bringing reinforcements, which raised Grant's force to 27,000 or more. Grant then established his line. McClelland's right rested on the river, or rather on a ravine running out from the river westwardly. Gen. Lew Wallace's Division joined its right to McClelland's left and curved northwardly to C. F. Smith's right. Smith's left rested on Hickman's creek. The line of battle was about three miles long. Though the Confederates were strongly intrenched, yet in some respects their condition was unfortunate. Gen. John B. Floyd was in command. It was charged that in 1860, while Secretary of War in the Federal Cabinet, he had used his authority treacherously in aid of the contemplated rebellion. As a consequence he knew that he was intensely hated and despised by

the Northern people and in the contingency of his falling into the hands of an infuriated Federal soldiery, his reckoning might be summary. Moreover, he seemed to have little capacity as a soldier. His second was Gen. Gideon J. Pillow, pretentious, querulous and shallow. From such leadership little was to be expected. And the most moderate ability would have been sufficient to cope with them. In the afternoon of the 14th Foote attacked. He was repulsed and himself wounded. The fleet fell back far enough to be out of danger. During the evening the Confederate leaders Floyd, Pillow and Buckner held a consultation. They decided that they could not defend against such odds. The question then was of losing both fort and army or of abandoning the fort and saving the army. They decided to mass on Grant's extreme right (McClermand), and if possible cut their way out and escape. The ground was covered with sleet and snow or frozen snow which of itself afforded a sort of light which facilitated the work of the Confederate soldiers in filling their haversacks and cartridge boxes and in being transferred to the Confederate left. This force was placed under Pillow's immediate command. About 5 a. m. next morning, Pillow attacked McClermand with fury.

At this point in the history of the battle an embarrassing question arises. Grant says that "on the morning of the 15th, before it was yet broad

day, a messenger from Flag Officer Foote handed me a note, expressing a desire to see me on the flag ship," that "I had no idea that there would be any engagement on land unless I brought it on myself," that he accordingly sent orders to his three division generals to do nothing without further directions from him, and that he then went to see Foote in his gunboat. Some of these statements are certainly singular, and as we have seen what freaks his memory committed in his account of the battle of Belmont we may wonder whether he has not again forgotten. Only the night before Foote had the whole of a long winter evening for consultation. Again, his fleet where then anchored was in no more danger than if anchored at Cairo, so that Foote had no occasion for haste. As a matter of fact he remained the next day. It looks then like a mixture of folly and impertinence for him to send a message through the darkness of the woods and in the bitterness of that sleety and snowy night to arouse Grant at dawn without occasion. Again, why did Grant face the biting blasts, cross the back water of Hickman's creek, and ride three miles or more to join Foote, and all without occasion? As he expected no fighting till he himself brought it on, there was no haste on his side. What fact was there then, nay, what conceivable fact can there have been to justify Foote in sending at such an hour, and in such weather, a request quite imperti-

ment or to justify Grant in responding to a request so remarkable, — a request that would be proper only if Foote was dying, or some sudden and serious fact had sprung up forbidding delay. Taking into view the circumstances that Foote had neither occasion nor disposition for haste, and as a fact made no haste, that Grant neither expected nor intended battle for the time, supposing the matter of bringing on battle to be in his discretion, that there cannot have been any reason either for Foote sending at such an hour so cruel a request, or for Grant's compliance, we may be pardoned for wondering whether this is not another case of bad memory. Yet it is true, first, that Grant did, at some hour in the morning, go to Foote's gunboat and remain there nearly all day, and, secondly, that before going he issued orders to his division generals restraining action.

Grant's headquarters were in the house of a Mrs. Crisp, near Hickman's creek and a mile or so in front of the Confederate line. Floyd attacked at 5 a. m., nearly two hours and a half before sunrise, his object being, if possible, to get some advantage from a surprise. McClelland found himself attacked by an overwhelming force. He resisted stubbornly. But it was evident that the enemy had massed upon him and he was driven back. About 8 o'clock he called on Wallace for aid, but Wallace was restrained by Grant's order. He sent forth-

with to Grant's headquarters for leave to help McClernand. Grant was absent and had left no authority to any one else. Seeing McClernand's peril, Wallace determined to take the bit in his mouth, and in spite of Grant's order to aid McClernand. He accordingly lent him Cruft's brigade. But with nearly the whole Confederate army against him, McClernand is still outnumbered. The battle rages furiously. Pillow's overwhelming hosts push on. McClernand is gradually but steadily forced back — back up the river, but at the same time back from the river, for Pillow is aiming to cut a way out. McClernand is driven back so far from the river that Wallace's right is engaged. No restraining order forbids to resist attack. Hence Pillow's opposition is increased.

Grant's continued absence was a terrible mistake. Hours before Pillow's success had been so great as to engage Wallace's right, that is to say, as early as 8 o'clock, the commander should have been on the ground. There was a golden opportunity. At 8 o'clock, in fact much earlier, it was certain that Floyd had massed against McClernand. But this meant that the remainder of his line was weakened. Smith and Wallace's left should at that hour have been pushed forward upon Buckner, whose thin line would have easily been brushed away. Then Smith and Wallace should have been wheeled around upon Pillow's right flank and rear. No troops in the

world will fight with an attacking enemy in rear. The result would have been that by 11 o'clock or at furthest by noon, 17,000 men, two miles from the fort, hemmed in against the river by 27,000, would have been bagged, Floyd, Forrest and all. But the army was without a head. Grant was at that time as completely absent from the battle of Fort Donelson as if he had been in Boston. McClelland had no authority to command Smith and Smith was bound to inaction by an express order from Grant. If the Federal army can be said to have had a commander at all, it was McClelland, for from 5 o'clock till after noon McClelland was in sole command of the battle, and from the time when by Pillow's continuous success, Wallace's right became engaged, Wallace and McClelland commanded each his own troops, but without having a common superior. As a rule an army in battle should have but one head. But McClelland and Wallace seem to have co-operated. In this case the head did not need any superior skill. Any officer in the army could have seen at 8 o'clock that the enemy had massed upon McClelland, that hence his line in front of Smith and Wallace was weak, and that hence and manifestly the one thing to be done, was to push Smith and Wallace straight upon his line, then wheel upon Pillow's rear and end the battle. But the head, instead of ordering the move, had by order forbidden any move.

After McClelland had been driven back from the river and Wallace's right had become engaged, the enemy was encouraged and the Federal troops correspondingly depressed. Pillow's men pressed on. The fury of the combat increased, for McClelland's affairs were going badly and McClelland was a fierce fighter. On both sides the men fought bravely. The hill tops were crowned with cannon, whose roar proved that the artillery on both sides was well served. The country was rugged and the hill sides were covered with trees and undergrowth. To storm batteries, rushing up steep slopes and through tangled brushwood and in face of cannon and musketry is toilsome. The night before, stormy and bitter, had been trying to the troops. The ground was covered with frozen snow, the blast had been piercing and the men had suffered. Hence, they were not in the best fighting trim. Waging battle, especially waging battle on so difficult a field, is laborious. Steadily from 5 a. m. until probably 3 p. m. or later, for the hour cannot be stated with certainty, the combatants had fought fiercely and constantly and they became tired. There was a lull.

At this point Floyd blundered fatally. He had planned to cut his way out. He had succeeded. He had been able to throw probably 15,000 men against 10,000. Through Grant's absence he had succeeded in cutting his way. The Federal troops, in addition to being tired, were also in some confu-



sion. Continually driven back for ten hours by overpowering numbers, they had lost heart, while success had inspirited the Confederates. At 3 p. m. or later, when the lull began, Floyd, without an instant's delay, should have placed a line of troops in front of McClelland and Wallace as a screen, and then with all speed have pushed the rest of his command out between the Federal army and the river, trusting to fate, the momentary fatigue and demoralization of the Federal force and the lack of a commander to order pursuit, for a final safe deliverance. But Floyd hesitated and was lost.

It was during the lull that Grant came upon the field. In 1 Personal Memoirs, 306, in connection with the fact of his return from Foote's gunboat to the battlefield, he says: "I saw the men standing in knots, talking in the most excited manner. The enemy had come out in full force to cut his way out and make his escape. McClelland's division had to bear the brunt of the attack from this combined force." Badeau says: "There was no pursuit and the battle was merely *lulled* not ended. A few minutes of observation and inquiry, enabled Grant to decide, for the condition of affairs was simple and the proper course of action obvious. Turning to Col. J. D. Webster of his staff, he said (see 1 Per. Mem. 306 *et seq.*): "Some of our men are pretty badly demoralized, but the enemy must be more so for he has attempted to force

his way out but has fallen back. The one who attacks first now will be victorious and the enemy will have to be in a hurry to get ahead of me." "I determined to make the assault *at once* on our left." As before stated this is exactly what ought to have been done seven or eight hours before, when McClernand called for help, that is, when it first could have been known by the Federal commander that the enemy had massed upon McClernand. "It was clear to my mind that the enemy had started to march out with his entire force except a few pickets, and if our attack could be made on the left before the enemy could redistribute his force along the line, we would find but little opposition, except from the intervening abatis." "We rode rapidly to Smith's quarters when I explained the situation to him and directed him to charge the enemy's works, saying at the same time he would find but a very thin line to contend with. The general was off in an incredibly short time." Smith carried Buckner's rifle pits with no considerable resistance, but the approach of night forbade further action. Then the fort was doomed. Simultaneously with Smith's advance, McClernand and Wallace were ordered forward. Having had a rest, their troops pushed on with alacrity, drove Pillow back to his works, and by keeping him engaged, prevented his re-enforcing Buckner. Badeau, the friend and eulogist of Grant, and who wrote under Grant's

inspiration, says (1 Badeau, 47): "Half an hour more of daylight would have sufficed to carry the fort. Grant perceived this, and declared that the rebels were fighting only for darkness." During the night the Confederate leaders decided to surrender. Floyd behaved as became him; he abandoned the brave men who had fought under him and skulked away under cover of night, having the additional meanness to take with him his own brigade. Floyd turned over the command to Pillow, who turned it over to Buckner. Forrest, with his cavalry, also escaped during the night; but Forrest deserves no censure as, unlike Floyd, he owed no obligation to the army. Next morning Buckner surrendered, though in querulous and unbecoming terms. He complained that Grant refused conditions, and characterized the refusal as "ungenerous and unchivalrous." It was not a case for generosity or chivalry. Buckner was in Grant's power and they were antagonists in war. Grant would have been false to duty if he had granted conditions. More than 14,000 prisoners were captured.

There is a dispute as to the hour of the day at which Grant went to the gunboat, and the hour at which he returned to the battlefield. Pillow attacked about two hours before sunrise. As no reason existed or has ever been declared to exist why Grant should start out in a fierce wintry night to visit Foote, we must conclude that he did not go before

sunrise. If so, the battle had been raging two hours before he mounted his horse. How long did he need to stay with Foote? He had no more authority to command Foote than Foote had to command him. The relation of Foote and Grant was that of voluntary co-operation, nothing more. Besides, he had no request to make of Foote and made no request. Not being a naval officer Grant could not consult with Foote in a professional sense. It is clear that Grant did not mean to open fight that day, for he spent most of the day on the gunboat. Any matter of mere necessary business that Grant may have had with Foote could have been done in ten minutes. If Grant started to the gunboat "before it was yet broad day," that is, about 7 a. m., he could have been back by 8. If he started at the time he names, he started about two hours after nearly the whole Confederate army had attacked McClelland, and as he stepped into his stirrups his ears were greeted with the rattle of 25,000 muskets and the boom of cannon from every hilltop, and he smoked his cigar in the gunboat from sunrise to after 3 p. m., while his army, without a head, was being hour after hour driven back. Badeau himself states that Grant did not return till 9. But to say that from 7 till 9 they were engaged in necessary consultation is a sheer and impudent absurdity. A tax that is outrageous credulity resents. Besides, absence from 7 till 9, while battle

is raging, is as unmilitary, as unpardonable, as gross and criminal neglect of duty, as absence from 7 till 3 p. m. The question is, why did Grant go to the gunboat after Pillow's attack? Again, what was he doing during all the time he was there? It is admitted by himself that he was on the gunboat till the lull in fighting, excepting the time consumed in galloping from the gunboat to the field. I repeat the question, what was he doing all this time at the gunboat. I am unable to find evidence and hence leave the question unanswered.

The next question is, at what hour did Grant reach the battlefield? Badeau says at 9 a. m. A court-martial would not care to hear further testimony. If the head of an army quits his post of duty and, his army being heavily attacked, remains absent during two hours of battle, any court-martial would be ready to decide the case.

But is it true that he returned at 9? Let us see. In considering his account of Belmont, and his statement that he left Cairo without orders to attack anywhere and did not "intend anything of the kind," that afterward he "speedily resolved," to attack Belmont "break up the camp and return," we found his memory at fault and that he had in fact determined on the 6th not only to attack Belmont but actually to fix his headquarters there. Possibly the statement of Badeau, assuming it to have been dictated by Grant, may need modification.

At what hour did Grant reach the battlefield of Donelson? It is certain that he arrived during the lull, that is, when there was a cessation in fighting. Badeau says: "There was no pursuit and the battle was merely *lulled* not ended." In Personal Memoirs, 305, Grant says: "Just as I landed (from the gun-boat), I met Captain Hillyer of my staff, white with fear, not for his personal safety but for the safety of the National troops. He said the enemy had come out of his lines in full force and attacked and scattered McClelland's division which was in full retreat." "I saw everything favorable for us along the left and center. When I came to the right, appearances were different. \* \* \* The division broke and a portion fled, but most of them, as they were not pursued, only fell back out of the range of the enemy." "I saw the men standing in knots, talking in a most excited manner," etc. By his own statement then, as also by Badeau's, Grant reached the battlefield during the lull. The inquiry is as to the hour of the lull. In fixing the hour of a fact occurring in battle witnesses are apt to differ. The excitement, the tumult, the peril, the succession and yet continuing succession of noteworthy facts, at what hour this hill was stormed, at what hour that bayonet charge was made, at what hour such an officer fell, at what hour a certain battery was captured, at what hour the flank was attacked, — it is impossible, in such a condition of things, to note

and afterward it is impossible to remember the exact time at which a particular fact occurred.

Gen. Lew Wallace in his report says: "About 3 o'clock Gen. Grant rode up the hill and ordered an advance and attack on the enemy's left, while Gen. Smith attacked on the right." Col. Cruft thinks it was later. In his report he says, "At about 4 p. m. an order was received from Gen. Wallace to co-operate with Col. Smith's brigade in carrying the enemy's works." Maj. Frederic Arn, commanding a regiment in Cruft's brigade, agrees with Cruft. In his report he says: "The regiment was kept in this position till about 4 p. m." This testimony seems to indicate that it was probably about 4 p. m. when Grant reached the battle ground and gave the order mentioned by Wallace.

But there is another sort of evidence more reliable than the recollection of witnesses, namely, the subsequent course of the battle. Grant, on reaching the field and observing the look of things, said to Col. Webster, "The enemy will have to be in a hurry if he gets ahead of me." This indicates a purpose to move quickly. "I determined to make the assault *at once* on our left." "If our attack could be made on the left before the enemy could redistribute his forces along the line, we should find but little opposition, except from the intervening abatis." Grant sees that the one thing now needed is swiftness in action. "I directed Col. Webster to ride with me

and call out to the men as we passed, 'Fill your cartridge boxes *quick*, and get into line,' the enemy is trying to escape and he must not be permitted to do so. This acted like a charm." "We rode *rapidly* to Smith's quarters, when I explained to him the situation and directed him to charge the enemy's works in his front with his whole division, saying at the same time that he would find nothing but a very thin line to contend with. The general was off *in an incredibly short time*, going in advance himself *to keep his men from firing* while they were working through the abatis intervening between them and the enemy. The outer line of rifle pits was *soon* passed and the night of the 15th, Gen. Smith with much of his division bivouacked within the lines of the enemy." We have heretofore seen, both from Badeau and from Grant, that Smith's progress was arrested by darkness; that in another half hour the fort would be captured; that Grant declared that the rebels (McClelland and Wallace were resisted), were fighting only for darkness. At that time the sun set about 5:36 p. m. As Smith "was off in an incredibly short time" and as his force had only the intervening abatis to overcome and went on without firing, and as they merely reached, and not all of them even reached the enemy's works till darkness set in, it becomes certain, from Grant's own statements, that he must have reached the battle ground later than 4 o'clock.



To sum up : In a desperate battle, begun at 5 a. m., Grant, without any specific assignable reason and first issuing a disabling order, takes refuge in a gunboat and there remains while his ear is deafened by the roar of artillery till about 4 p. m. Why did he go to the gunboat? How was he engaged while there?

The American people, with their usual folly, forgot to inquire into facts and Grant was hailed as the conqueror at Fort Donelson. He was at once promoted. Who else was promoted? Everybody sees that McClelland was practically in command. Grant himself says, "he bore the brunt of the battle." Rather, he fought the battle. For his success clearly he deserved promotion. Who else did? Certainly not Smith, for he was inactive (not culpably), till an hour or less before dark and then simply moved forward. Unlike McClelland's his task required no particle of military skill, no advancing and withdrawing, and flanking, no selecting and seizing strong positions, no ambushes and feints and charges. His task was merely to order his line forward through the abatis when Grant directed and this for probably less than an hour. Any lieutenant could have done the same. What then did Smith do? Almost nothing. What did McClelland do? Almost everything. But Smith was promoted. Why? He was from West Point. McClelland was not promoted. Why? He was merely a good com-

mander. Both Halleck and Grant recommended Smith's promotion. Neither recommended McClermand's.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Comments on the facts in the course of the narrative have been such as almost to preclude reflections.

1. Even if the fact had not proved it so, it was error in Grant to conclude that there would be no fighting till he brought it on. In presence of a hostile army, a general must always be expecting an attack.

2. It was error in Grant not to make an attack himself on the 15th. His force was overwhelmingly superior. The weather was bitter, and troops inexperienced in campaigning cannot endure such exposure if they see it to be needless without losing morale. From Grant's conduct it is certain that he did not intend to attack before the 16th at any rate. But on the 16th, after another night of suffering, his troops would have fought with less spirit.

3. In the whole enterprise of capturing Fort Donelson, it is impossible to find any movement in which Grant displayed mind.

4. The credit of capturing Fort Donelson does not belong to Grant at all. It belongs to McClermand. To Grant belongs only discredit.

5. For his conduct in quitting his headquarters for the gunboat and absenting himself till after 4 p. m. he should have been sent before a court-martial.

## FORWARD.

---

March 1st, Halleck ordered Grant to move his army up the Tennessee river. On the 2d Halleck received an anonymous letter stating that Grant had got on a spree, left his command and gone to Nashville. Now, Grant had no right to quit his command without leave, and in the ordinary condition of his mind, he knew that as well as anybody. Besides, he had no military business at Nashville.

If, however, it was true that he was on a drunk his conduct is explained. Was this anonymous letter entitled to credence? At first blush the generous mind is disposed to condemn such letters as emanating from cowardice. In civil life as a rule they do. But it is the duty of the historian to make proper discriminations. Grant, like every commander of an army, had almost despotic power over his army. Any subordinate, a staff officer, for example, if he saw that Grant's drunkenness was imperiling public interests, may, however brave and manly, have been impelled by a sense of patriotic duty, and even without personal hostility to Grant, to adopt some measure to check Grant's waywardness and have

thought an anonymous letter, which would effect his purpose without imperiling his position, the proper means. Gentlemen prefer to hold in honorable confidence the enjoyments of convivial hours. The author of the letter may have known confidentially, what the public cannot now know, and what, on account of this honorable confidence, he might have feared his inability to prove, the secret of Grant's abandonment of his army and departure to Nashville. If Grant was neglecting his duties and even had quitted his army because drunk, and as he had been through life fond of the bottle, the writer may have thought that a solemn duty to the great cause required that his present conduct be made known to his superior. An anonymous letter written under such circumstances and from such motives may speak the truth.

Halleck telegraphed the facts to McClellan at Washington. McClellan, in answer, said that such conduct could not be allowed and authorized Grant's arrest. Grant was suspended from command. He denied, asserted and explained, and on the 13th Halleck having well aired his official dignity, sent him a complimentary dispatch. In reply Grant says that he had thought it would be impossible for him to serve longer without a court of inquiry. "Your telegram of yesterday, however, places such a different phase upon my position that I will again assume command and give every effort to the suc-

cess of our cause. Under the worst circumstances I would do the same." Not to speak of the phrase "placing a different phase upon my position," the reader is puzzled to know the meaning of "under the worst circumstances I would do the same." But Grant's early proficiency in study was such that the lessons he studied, never understood, were soon forgotten and he was not of a bookish turn. If when he first "thought it would be impossible to serve longer without a court of inquiry," he had demanded such a court, he would have shown a readiness to meet the charges of "drunk on duty," and "abandoning his post of duty without leave," and "abandoning his army during battle," that would now be gratifying to the public. Such a court would have destroyed forever all unpatriotic suspicions respecting the gunboat, and Grant would naturally have been delighted at such an investigation.

Halleck had put Smith in command of the force that was to ascend the Tennessee, giving him authority to select the landing place and fix the camp. Smith executed the trust with wisdom. He selected Pittsburg Landing and on March 15th this place was occupied by Federal troops. They had been transported on steamboats, convoyed by gunboats, which in procession stretched for miles along the river. A portion of the force was left at Savannah, a little town nine miles by river below, that

is, north of Pittsburg Landing on the east bank. Early in March Gen. Smith had received a hurt to his leg which necessitated his turning over the command at Pittsburg to Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman and himself retired to Savannah, where, on April 25th, he died. Sherman has since said that but for Smith's misfortune, he would have commanded at Shiloh and Grant would have "disappeared to history." Meanwhile, Halleck, having displayed his authority splendidly, as a peacock displays his tail, restored Grant fully to his command and Grant reached Savannah and relieved Smith March 17th. For some reason, which can not have been a good one, he kept his headquarters at Savannah.

Meanwhile the Confederates are not idle. Corinth, twenty-three miles southwest of Pittsburgh, was a railroad center, and to the South the chief strategic point in that region. In the Confederate view it must be held at all hazards. In the Federal view it must be captured at all hazards. Both Gen. Albert Sydney Johnston and Gen. G. T. Beauregard were placed there to inspire confidence among Southern people, and to encourage volunteering. Troops poured in by thousands, brave, ardent and resolute, but badly armed and raw. In both these respects they were inferior to the Federal troops. The number that fought at Shiloh was probably 40,000. Grant supposed it to be greater. On Satur-

day, April 5th, the day before the battle, he dispatched to Halleck, "the number of the enemy at Corinth and within supporting distance cannot be far from 80,000 men." In a letter written next day, during the battle, he says: "The rebels are estimated at over 100,000." Notwithstanding this supposed immense superiority in the enemy's strength, Grant was confident that he would not be attacked. On the 5th, the day before the battle, and while Johnston was actually on the march, and within a few miles of him, he dispatched to Halleck: "I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack (general one) being made upon us, but will be prepared should such a thing take place." Though assuming command on the 17th ult., he had not then made, and during that day, the 5th, did not make or order one particle of preparation. In one day he could have thrown up earthworks and in that hilly and heavily wooded region, have constructed formidable abatis. But especially he could have placed his troops in something like line of battle. Not the slightest preparation was made. For years after the battle of Shiloh, it was understood by the public that the Federal troops were in fact so camped that they could be promptly called into line of battle. At last, however, we have the truth. Sherman had been charged with the duty of placing the different bodies of troops. He had accordingly caused a map of the immediate region to be made showing, among

other things, exactly the locality of the different bodies of soldiers. On the arrival of Gen. D. C. Buell, Sherman gave him this map to aid him in directing his force in battle. In a magazine article on the battle of Shiloh Buell has published a *fac simile* of that map. From this it appears that troops were encamped without the slightest regard to attack and to a line of battle, one division being nearly a mile in rear of another, one division being divided, a part at one place and another part perhaps five miles distant, Wallace's division being miles distant from the main army and hence liable to be swooped down upon by a superior force and captured. The stupidity of placing troops thus when in a hostile country and in presence of the enemy, an enemy, as Grant telegraphed to Halleck, of more than double of what he declares to have been his own strength, may be charged to Sherman; but it is especially to be charged to Grant who was Sherman's superior. Even as late as Saturday, 5th, Grant ordered that Buell's army encamp at a point on the Tennessee, south of Lick Creek. He directed McPherson, his engineer, to go to the place and select the spot. Thus the irregularity would have been increased and by Grant's own order. In short, it is amazing that any man of average mind, whether with military education or not, and whether even with military experience or not, should have scattered and disposed an army so wretchedly.



March 11th, President Lincoln issued an order of which an effect was to place Gen. Don C. Buell in Gen. Halleck's military department. Thereupon Halleck immediately ordered him with his command of 20,000 to report to Grant. For convenience of march Buell separated his army, putting Gen. William Nelson in advance. Friday, April 4th, Grant wrote to Nelson not to hurry as the vessels necessary to convey his command from Savannah to Pittsburgh were busy. If this suggestion had not been disregarded what would have been Grant's fate? And why should not Nelson march direct to Pittsburgh, as he in fact did?

Grant's conduct was amazing. He seems to have been utterly unconscious of his situation. For more than two weeks he had been in personal command. He seems not to have reflected that he was in the enemy's country, and in the military sense, in presence of an enemy which he supposed to be vastly his superior. He makes no particle of effort at strengthening his position. He had seen abatis at Belmont and at Donelson, and knew its efficacy in obstructing the advance of an attacking force. He constructs no abatis. He ought to have known that his situation required that he keep his army compact and in all respects ready to receive attack. Yet he keeps his army scattered and provides by express order for further scattering. He ought to have scoured the country daily with reconnoiter-

ing parties. He almost totally neglects reconnoitering. In fact he seems fairly to have courted surprise. It is safe to say that no average business man, after one year's military experience in high command, would have made such an uninterrupted series of blunders.

## SHILOH.

---

Johnston, 40,000 strong, was at and near Corinth. Grant's army numbered, according to his estimate, 38,000 effectives. Sherman fixes the number at 43,000. Such are the estimates of military men. It was probably between 50,000 and 55,000. Pittsburg Landing is a hamlet of three or four huts on the left or west bank of the Tennessee river, whose course here is due north. From the west, Lick creek and Snake creek empty into it, Snake creek being the more northerly of the two. About a mile west of the mouth of Snake creek, Owl creek, running from a southerly direction, empties into Snake creek. Owl and Snake creeks are about parallel with Lick creek and about three miles distant. All these creeks have, in rainy weather, narrow swampy valleys, and they afforded protection to Grant's flanks. There were also smaller creeks running irregularly as tributaries to each of these three creeks, and affecting the battle ground not so much by the water they contained as by the hills on each side, some of which were steep and heavily covered by underbrush. The battle ground lay between

Lick and Owl creek. Apart from its valleys it is perhaps a hundred feet above the level of the Tennessee, nearly all of it well covered with timber. The hamlet called Pittsburg Landing was in a narrow, low bottom at the foot of a bluff. Shiloh was the name of a Methodist log meeting house two and a half miles west of the river.

In selecting this ground Smith had shown wisdom. For defense the position was formidable. Sherman says: "The position was naturally strong. But even as we were on the 6th of April you might search the world over and not find a more advantageous field of battle." Sherman's command extended from Owl creek to Shiloh. Prentiss' command far in the rear of Sherman's line and with a gap between of half a mile to a mile extended to Lick creek. About three quarters of a mile to the rear of Sherman lay McClernand. Near the river and in rear of McClernand, were Gen. W. H. L. Wallace and Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut. Away up south, near the mouth of Lick creek, quite isolated from the army and perhaps three miles from the body of Sherman's troops, lay one of his brigades under Stewart. About eight miles down the Tennessee, that is north of Pittsburg, at Crump's Landing, lay a part of Gen. Lew Wallace's division of 7,500; about two miles west of Crump's Landing was another part and about five miles west was the remainder. Instead of being kept, while in a hos-

tile country and in the presence of the enemy, compact and encamped in line of battle, they were systematically scattered. For nineteen days Grant had been approving it, and on the nineteenth day, the day before attack, he himself had ordered a further scattering.

Johnston, in command of the Confederate army, knew that Buell was advancing to Grant and wished to attack before his arrival. On Thursday, April 3d, he issued orders for a general advance on Friday morning. Owing to detentions we are not concerned in inquiring into the attack could not be made on the 5th as intended. It is safe to say that but for these detentions, Grant's army would have been annihilated. Yet no preparation was made. Though a force estimated by Grant at 80,000 was at the moment marching, and most of them then near at hand, to attack his army, estimated by him at 38,000, no abatis was ordered, no shovelful of earth was displaced, no log breastwork formed, no advantage whatever was attempted to be taken of this strong position, no order was given to McClernand to move forward and fill the gap between Sherman and Prentiss, no order was given to Stewart to leave his safe valley retreat and join Sherman, no order was given to Wallace to quit Crump's Landing and be able to fight, no order was given to W. H. L. Wallace and Hurlbut to get into line of battle, no reconnoissance of any value was made, in short, not a single act of preparation

was made to redeem the pledge Grant made to Halleck that he would "be prepared" for an attack. On the night of April 5th, apart from the receipt of re-enforcements, Grant was in exactly the same condition as on the 17th ult., when he assumed personal command, even to the extent of continuing the amazing blunder of sleeping at Savannah.

A foolish practice was allowed to the pickets, on being relieved in the morning, to fire off their guns. Accustomed to this morning round of shots the Federal army would not, of course, take alarm at musket shots, though they came from an enemy. Saturday night, April 5th, 1862, Johnson's troops were deployed in line of battle a mile and a half west of Shiloh. The supposed 80,000 at dawn were up and stealthily advancing while the Federal commander was asleep at Savannah. At five o'clock and fourteen minutes in the morning of the 6th firing began. The Federal army, interpreting it to be the ordinary picket shots, took no alarm. Never was surprise more complete. Officers and privates were shot in their tents. Breakfasts were found half eaten. Federal troops, sometimes in spite of their officers and sometimes led by them, in consternation at finding themselves apparently overwhelmed, fled back to the river in multitudes. Grant, who says the battle began at 8 a. m., heard the firing at Savannah and proceeded to Pittsburg by boat, stopping on the way at Crump's to see

Wallace. Grant says (1 Pers. Mem. 336) that he reached the front, which was two and a half miles west of the river, at 10 a. m. Yet Gen. D. C. Buell says that at 1 p. m. on the 6th he first met Grant on the steamboat which lay at Pittsburg, and was protected against cannon balls by the lofty bluffs, and he clearly intimates the opinion, from evidence then before him, that Grant left the boat at that hour for the first time. The Federal troops were steadily driven back. About the middle of the afternoon, fighting like a tiger, Prentiss was flanked, surrounded and captured, for Grant's left was specially pressed. Prentiss met misfortune only because he fought better than others and the army was so ill commanded that his flanks were not protected. At about 2:30 Johnston was mortally wounded. A bullet struck him in the back of his right thigh about three inches above the knee joint and severed the artery. The simplest surgery, if a surgeon had been at hand, would have saved his life. He bled to death in about fifteen minutes. Beauregard succeeded to the command. The Confederates steadily advanced. Grant's left, now weakened by Prentiss' capture, was pressed back and yet back, until, quite detached from Lick creek, it now rested on the Tennessee, not many rods south of Pittsburg. His right was still far out from the river and flanked by Owl creek. His line then, instead of lying north and south as in the morning,

lay in the evening northwest and southeast. The Confederate plan had been to keep Grant's right constantly engaged so that it would be unwilling to spare troops to other parts of the line, and then to throw its strength chiefly on the left and drive the Federal army back upon Snake creek. This uneven distribution of Johnston's force was a maneuver, but there is nothing to show that Grant perceived the maneuver or that it affected his management. The maneuver has succeeded. Grant's left is driven back quite to the river. The shot begin to fall and to do some slight execution at Pittsburg. Grant's peril is imminent. At this time Ammen's brigade of Buell's advance reaches Pittsburg and pushes rapidly to the field on Grant's extreme left. The Confederates are partially checked by a ravine running out from the river between them and Grant's left. Col. Webster of Grant's staff, posts a battery on the bluff near Pittsburg. The gunboats, too, open fire. But Grant's troops are dispirited by being driven back all day long. The Confederates are correspondingly inspirited. A little longer and Grant's army will be driven back upon Owl and Snake creeks and bagged. At this critical moment, from some unaccountable whim, Beauregard ordered a cessation of hostilities. Grant was saved. He could not save himself; Beauregard saved him.

During the night Buell's army arrived. This double army was too much for Beauregard. Early



Monday morning the battle was resumed. But Beauregard soon had reason to repent his ill-timed order of the previous evening. He was driven back fighting to the point at which the engagement began on Sunday, and then he ordered a retreat. The strange fact is that he was not pursued. With Buell's aid Grant had ceased to be the vanquished and had become the victor, yet he did not get, nor make the slightest attempt to get, any of the fruits of victory. On the contrary, he allowed his enemy, at that hour not only his inferior, but whipped, to retire as quietly as from a holiday parade.

Sherman got immense credit (and probably still has it) from the fact that, unlike the left, the right, which he commanded, was not driven back to the river. It is thought that this fact demonstrates his superiority to the other division commanders. In truth it demonstrates nothing. It was Johnston's plan not to drive back Grant's right but to mass on his left and turn it and force his line back upon Owl creek so as to cut off escape by the river. Thursday, April 3d, Johnston distributed among his division generals an order containing, among other things the following: —

“II. In the approaching battle every effort will be made to turn the left flank of the enemy,” etc.

Grant issued a congratulatory order in which he declared that his troops had “maintained their po-

sition, repulsed and routed," the enemy. Grant surely knew what it is to "maintain a position" and what it is for an enemy to be "routed." What must be the embarrassment of the historian when such is military veracity?

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. A general commanding an army in a hostile country and confronting any hostile force, especially a large hostile force, but above all, a supposed superior hostile force, has many duties that are peculiar to such a situation. All these peculiar duties Grant neglected.

2. On assuming command March 17th, he should have remained with his army. The reason he gives for prolonging his stay at Savannah, namely, that he might be there to meet Buell on his arrival, had better not have been stated.

3. He should have forbidden the firing of guns in the morning by relieved pickets. While his command was at Cairo, the practice would not have been objectionable. But in presence of the enemy it made complete surprise more complete. Nor is this matter of picket firing in the morning trivial and unworthy of a historian's notice. On the contrary, it is important.

4. The scattered condition of the troops prevented for perhaps hours, in fact, as to Lew. Wallace a

whole day, the formation of a complete line of battle. Such irregularities demoralize troops, and occasion flight. But as some troops are seen running others join in the flight. Demoralization is contagious. Sherman says, "at least 10,000 ran away." This was due to Grant's mismanagement. With proper reconnoissance he would have known the day before of the contemplated attack and instead of not having "the faintest idea," he would have had his army in line of battle and been prepared.

5. The question of surprise it is idle to discuss. Grant does no credit to his intellect in denying surprise. His lack of candor at times excites disgust. We see it in his explanation of his Belmont folly. We see it in his explanation of his visit to the gunboat at Donelson. On the question of surprise at Shiloh, the fact is so indisputable that that Grant insults public intelligence by disputing it. The truth is, he ought in his own interest to plead surprise affirmatively. If he insists that his army on the morning of April 6th was, in his judgment, prepared for battle, he proves himself the most wretchedly incapable commander that ever wore a sword, and proves moreover that when on the 5th he dispatched to Halleck that he had not "the faintest idea of an attack" he told a falsehood. Grant has a weakness for vindicating himself and the reasons he gives are not always credible to his

invention, — as when he justifies his continued stay at Savannah by saying that he remained there to meet Buell on his arrival. A reason without either sense or candor, sickens.

6. A critical study of this battle fails to show a single instance in which the commanding general's mind was impressed upon the battle either in planning it or during its progress.

## UNDER A CLOUD.

---

After Shiloh Grant was assailed fiercely. It was charged that he was incompetent. It was charged that he was drunk. But at the north patriotism was at white heat. As a result of the battle Beauregard had finally been repelled. This was enough. Patriotism insisted on taking the brightest view. Public folly refused to inquire narrowly and accepted gladly and boastfully the result. Grant was a hero.

Maj.-Gen. Henry Wager Halleck was not content. He saw the glory that attended victory, and saw too how cheaply it was got. He determined to shelve Grant and become the hero. Halleck was weak-minded, jealous, officious, touchy on the question of his official importance, profoundly convinced that West Point made great commanders, that a West Pointer though so remote from his military studies that he had forgotten everything, though so dull in his studies that he never in fact had really understood anything, was still, merely because a West Pointer, a strategist and tactician, while a civilian with strong and well-disciplined intellect, instructed in mature life by a critical study of the military art,

and instructed too by experience, could not possibly have military skill. He knew that if on a battlefield a civilian was sole commander and commanded successfully, yet because he was a mere civilian, he was without merit, while a West Pointer, who did next to nothing deserved promotion. Moreover, Halleck knew that his own merit was immense for he was not only a West Pointer, but he had actually written a book on the military art. True, the book was worthless, but still it was a book.

“ A book’s a book although there’s nothing in’t.”

The administration and the people were looking for a military chieftain. Halleck had written a book, and hence Halleck was the man.

On assuming personal command at Pittsburg, April 9th, Halleck started forthwith after the army that had been beaten only two days before, and was only twenty miles distant. He collected additional forces from all parts of his department, and soon had upward of 120,000 men. With such a force he could have crushed Beauregard. Though the enemy lay perfectly still at Corinth, Halleck, in exactly one calendar month, advanced nearly fifteen miles. If by this laughable deliberation he had wound anaconda-like around Beauregard’s army and captured it we might say that West Point wisdom gave compensation. But what makes the laughable deliberation more laughable is, that the moment it

suited Beauregard's convenience he took his entire army and every dollar's worth of military property and retired.

Soon after assuming personal command at Pittsburg Halleck displayed his petty jealousy. Though Grant's reputation from the capture of Donelson was undeserved, yet that, in connection with the fact that the enemy was finally driven back at Shiloh, made him a much-known man. That a subordinate should be more gazetted than himself was more than Halleck could bear. He dared not relieve Grant. He accordingly adopted the cowardly expedient of reorganizing his army in such a way as to leave Grant nominally second in command, but in fact having no command. He was still on paper in command of the military district of West Tennessee. Yet such is the despotism of military rule that Halleck sent orders direct to the corps commanders of that district, and even ordered movements of the corps without Grant's knowledge.

Halleck's demonstrated unfitness for his position induced the administration to find a higher position for the man who had been at West Point and had written a book. Unable to command successfully one army he was ordered to Washington to command all the armies. Still unfriendly to Grant his military eye saw evidences of genius in one Col. Robert Allen. He offered him the command of the army. It was declined. On Halleck's departure Grant succeeded in command, with headquarters at Corinth,

## ON THE DEFENSIVE.

---

For some months Grant's success was none of the best. One cause of failure was that he was a poor judge of human nature, or else allowed himself to gratify personal friendship at public expense. One Col. Mason, in command of an Ohio regiment at the battle of Shiloh, ran at the first shot with his whole command. Ashamed, afterward, of his conduct, he asked Grant for an important trust. Now, it is true that a single act of cowardice does not prove a man a coward. Frederick the Great and Murat are signal proofs to the contrary. But when an officer has shown himself conspicuously unreliable, he must expect to pass probation before receiving high trust. Yet Grant gave Mason charge of the posts of Clarksville and Fort Donelson, an independent command. He surrendered both shamefully. Col. Murphy, of a Wisconsin regiment, was placed in command of the post of Iuka, where large army stores were collected. Being attacked, he abandoned his post shamefully. Rosecrans was enraged and wished him sent before a court-martial, but Grant put him in command at Holly Springs, another



depot of supplies. Again he abandoned his post shamefully. If, before giving them important and independent commands, he had had affirmative knowledge that they were brave and trustworthy, he should not be blamed for the loss of Clarksville, Donelson and Holly Springs; but he had affirmative knowledge to the contrary. It would be tedious and not according to the plan of this little book to give a detailed account of the numerous petty disasters which befell under Grant's command. It is certain that affairs went badly. But only the more important facts can be noticed.

September 9th Grant telegraphed to Halleck: "I don't believe that a force can be brought against us at present that cannot be successfully resisted." On the 14th, five days afterward, Gen. Sterling Price seized Iuka, a Federal depot of supplies, which lay twenty-one miles east of Corinth. Price's enterprise was daring. His army ought to have been captured bodily. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, with about 9,000 men, was south of Corinth. Gen. E. O. Ord, with about the same number, moved eastward on the Memphis & Charleston Railroad from Corinth to Burnsville, a railroad town seven miles west of Iuka. Each of these Federal armies was about equal to Price's. Observe now Price's peril. To the north and east of Iuka were the Tennessee river and Bear creek, both of them of sufficient size to be barriers against the march of an

army. If Price, leaving Iuka, should march toward either of those streams, Rosecrans and Ord pursuing, his capture was inevitable. There remained to him a road to the northwest, one to the southwest, and one to the south, the two last being not far apart. By one of these three roads Price must escape, if he is to escape at all. Ord was directed to quit the railroad at Burnsville, move northward till he struck the road leading from Iuka to the northwest, and follow that road as far toward Iuka as practicable. Rosecrans was to occupy the two southerly roads and advance toward Iuka. Grant took his station at Burnsville, that is, with neither army. When Ord, on the northwest road, had reached a point near Iuka, Grant sent him an order that the instant he heard Rosecrans' cannon he was to push on to Iuka and attack wherever he might find the enemy. Exactly at this point Grant made a great and fatal mistake. As soon as he had directed that the sound of Rosecrans' cannon was to be Ord's order to advance and fight he had no further occasion to be at Burnsville, an intermediate point, and hence should immediately have joined Rosecrans and assumed personal command. Grant's diffidence of his skill as a field commander was in this instance ill-timed. The upshot of the matter was that in the afternoon of the 19th Price attacked and repulsed Rosecrans' advance, two miles southwest of Iuka, and during the succeeding night by

the southerly road, which Rosecrans had neglected to occupy, quietly retired, laden with booty. In the forenoon of the 20th Grant entered Iuka to find that Price's army, instead of being captured by him as it ought to have been, had beaten half his army, captured all his stores and escaped beyond successful pursuit. Grant's management was bad.

It was now Van Dorn's turn. He lay south, of Corinth, Price's army having been united with his. Grant had removed his headquarters September 23d to Jackson, less than forty miles north of Corinth, and connected with it directly by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. Van Dorn began movements which threatened Corinth. That town was strongly fortified. "By the 1st of October," says Grant, "it was fully apparent that Corinth was to be attacked with great force and determination." Grant placed Rosecrans there with about 20,000 men. Less than two hours' ride would have taken Grant himself to Corinth and thither, after giving necessary orders, he ought to have gone forthwith on the 1st. This was the more necessary because Rosecrans, only a few days before at Iuka had blundered miserably and had even disobeyed orders. But Grant seems to have been slow to acquire confidence in himself as a field commander. The diffidence which kept him on the gunboat at Donelson and at Burnsville during the battle of Iuka,

detained him at a distance of less than two hours' ride from Corinth, where the strongest reasons demanded his presence. Ord with 4,000 men was ordered from Bolivar to Corinth. Van Dorn had been informed that on the northwest of Corinth the fortification was insufficient. Accordingly October 2d, Van Dorn with a force, that Rosecrans fixes at 38,000, approached Corinth from that direction. On the 3d, Rosecrans having, under a previous order from Grant, gone out from his defenses proper to some remoter defenses that Halleck had constructed, and attacked Van Dorn, there was a severe battle. Rosecrans then retired behind his nearer fortifications. Early in the morning of the 4th, battle was resumed by Van Dorn and was waged fiercely. Charge after charge was made by the Confederates. Never was greater valor displayed. The contest was sanguinary. A little after noon, his loss having been frightful, Van Dorn gave up the attempt and forthwith began a retreat in haste. Ord's force had not time, after receipt of Grant's order, to reach Corinth, though pushing forward with all haste. About ten miles from Corinth, at a bridge spanning the Hatchie river, Van Dorn in retreat encountered Ord with 4,000 men on the opposite side of the river. Van Dorn's advance met a bloody repulse and rushed back in panic, a fact showing the extent of demoralization. Finding it impossible to cross the river in face of Ord,

Van Dorn was obliged to make a detour of six miles up the river to another crossing. Prior to the battle Grant had ordered Rosecrans, in case he should win a victory, to pursue instantly. But Rosecrans, shallow, pretentious, and vaporous, found it all he could do during the afternoon, to assure his troops that they had beaten the enemy. If Grant had been at Corinth as he could, and hence should have been, he could have started in hot pursuit of the vanquished foe.

Van Dorn had encountered Ord early in the morning of the 5th, who, as we have seen, drove his advance back in panic and compelled a retreat and detour. If Grant had been in Van Dorn's rear nothing could have prevented the capture of the Confederate army. On the morning of the 5th, Rosecrans began pursuit. He took the wrong road and went eight miles out of his way. The bridge at which Van Dorn crossed the Hatchie after his repulse by Ord was at Crum's mill. It was very long and narrow, being in fact a bridge not only across the river, but also across a morass bordering the river and impassable by troops. If Grant had been at Corinth and had pursued hotly and by any accident had missed catching Van Dorn between two fires on the morning of the 5th, here was another chance. At this long and narrow defile his capture would have been sure. But Grant was not at Corinth and Rosecrans reached one end of Crum's

mill bridge just as Van Dorn's rear was passing from the other end. Van Dorn escaped capture because Grant was not at his post of duty.

Now was the time to capture Vicksburg. All military minds knew the strategic value of that place. It was defenseless. The two Confederate armies, that under Price and that under Van Dorn, had combined, had been badly beaten, and were retreating in hot haste and much demoralized. A beaten, retreating and demoralized army is diminished every hour by straggling, while a victorious and pursuing army loses almost none. If Grant had been at Corinth to pursue Van Dorn, he could have destroyed or captured him and could then have pushed on and, without firing a shot, have occupied Vicksburg. Though Van Dorn had managed to escape, his army was in no condition to fight. Vicksburg still invited Federal occupancy. Rosecrans, having got as far south as Jonesboro, applied to Grant for leave to push on to Vicksburg. Since his bout with Halleck after Donelson, and his being shelved by Halleck after Shiloh, and Halleck's elevation to command at Washington, Grant had found it prudent to be obsequious. Accordingly when Rosecrans asked leave to advance to Vicksburg, Grant telegraphed to Halleck for advice. Halleck instantly answered submitting the question to Grant's discretion, but recommending pursuit. Grant refused. It is impossible to conceive any valid reason for

Grant's refusal. He knew that Vicksburg could be occupied. Is it possible that he was unwilling that the credit of capturing that important point should belong to his subordinate and toyed with the public interests for the sake of increasing his own fame? The error necessitated the long amphibious siege of Vicksburg at a cost of millions of dollars and thousands of lives.

## ON TO VICKSBURG.

---

October 26 Grant wrote to Halleck: "With small re-enforcements I think I would be able to move down the Mississippi Central Railroad and cause the evacuation of Vicksburg." The question at once arises why he could not, eighteen days before, with more safety and assurance, on the heels of a beaten and demoralized foe, and when Vicksburg was practically defenseless, have "caused the evacuation." In November the movement began. It is to be inferred that he had received the "small re-enforcements." November 8 he informed Sherman that he estimated the rebel force at 30,000, and he was "strong enough to handle that number without gloves." In command of the Confederate army Van Dorn had been superseded by Lieut.-Gen. J. C. Pemberton, a feeble and pompous commander, who had fortified strongly on the south side of the Tallahatchie at the railroad crossing. Grant had hardly commenced the march when a new trouble arose. Gen. McClelland, partly through the superior strength of his intellect, disciplined by years of professional study as a lawyer, and hence accustomed



to investigate and to prosecute a train of reasoning, and partly through his military experience, beginning with the silly affair at Belmont, in which he at least acquitted himself handsomely, going through the battle of Donelson, in which he chiefly was commanding general, and afterward at Shiloh, in which he handled his troops with skill and fought with valor, had conceived a plan for opening the Mississippi. He went to Washington and laid his plan before the President, by whom it was considered carefully and finally approved and McClelland was directed to submit it to Halleck. Here Halleck was all himself. He assumed an oracular *hauteur* becoming a man who had been at West Point and had written a book. He who had yet to command in battle and who in invasive warfare marched an army nearly fifteen miles in thirty days, intimated to McClelland that he was too busy to consider such schemes, and, if he had time, lacked inclination. But occasionally Lincoln, as the phrase was, "put his foot down." Both residing in Springfield, Ill., and practicing law together, Lincoln knew McClelland's intellect and knew that he had the ability to understand the profession of arms as he did the profession of law; that he would make himself master of whatever he undertook. Moreover, McClelland's cogent reasonings convinced Lincoln. He accordingly, overruling Halleck, instructed the Secretary of War to make an order authorizing McClelland to organize

an expedition to open the Mississippi, and the President made an indorsement on the order in his own handwriting containing these words: "I add that I feel a deep interest in the success of the expedition." Here was an express recognition of McClernand's river expedition. Like all military expeditions it needed to be concealed from the enemy, and hence from the public, that is, it needed to be kept secret. But it gradually leaked out. Grant saw accounts of it in the newspapers. Probably, too, Secretary Stanton told Halleck and Halleck told Grant—for Halleck would not be overridden with impunity in favor of anybody, but especially not in favor of a civilian. Grant was undoubtedly worried. He saw a rival for military fame. Now, it must be said in favor of Grant that he was not naturally a vain man. Ignorant of books, few men took a more common-sense view of things. He doubtless reflected that Belmont was a laughable failure, that he had blundered at Fort Henry, that his conduct at Donelson could not be nicely inquired into, that his defeat at Shiloh was the result of his incapacity, and his ultimate victory there not to be credited to him, that his absence from the field at Iuka and the disaster there could not be remarked upon, and that his absence from Corinth, though within two hours' ride, and though he had the 1st, the 2d and most of the 3d in which to go, was not to be commended. He doubtless concluded, and with much

good sense that if a man of strong and well-disciplined intellect, and superior military experience and learning should undertake the job of opening the Mississippi and should succeed, he, Grant, would be overshadowed and might, in Sherman's language, "disappear to history." He accordingly began to prepare against such a contingency. Though at starting on his expedition "to cause the evacuation of Vicksburg," he professed to have sufficient force, yet on the 9th he telegraphed to Halleck, "re-enforcements are arriving slowly." He is evidently worried as to what disposition will be made of troops then on the Mississippi. Sherman was at Memphis with a considerable force. To remove these from the river might disable McClermand. On the 10th Grant asks Halleck "am I to have Sherman subject to my orders or is [are] he and his force reserved for some special service?" Here, then, is the secret of his uneasiness. He is haunted by the prospect of some "special service." From this time on it would seem that Grant allowed himself without cause to hate McClermand. Having been informed that Sherman was subject to his order, he appears to have thought it a good move, in the way of stopping any river expedition, to withdraw his forces from the river to himself on the line of the Mississippi Central Railroad. Accordingly, being at Holly Springs, he, on the 14th, orders Sherman, being at Memphis, "to move with two divisions,

and *if possible* with three divisions, to Oxford or Tallahatchie as soon as possible." By the 30th Sherman had joined Grant with three divisions, for Sherman, Grant and Halleck sympathized in the purpose to maintain the supremacy of West Point, and to that end Sherman was willing to strip Memphis and other military posts on the Mississippi of Federal troops.

On the 26th Grant had expressed the opinion that "with small re-enforcements" he could cause the evacuation of Vicksburg. The re-enforcements being furnished he started. Along the line further re-enforcements overtook him slowly. At last three divisions (there were but three divisions at Fort Donelson in all) arrive under command of his favorite lieutenant. But as, on the 26th, he required only "small re-enforcements," it cannot be that he ordered to himself from the Mississippi a whole army because he needed it. What then was his motive, what can have been his motive in stripping the posts on the Mississippi of troops? But one motive is conceivable, namely, to disable and foil McClernand.

The plan Grant is now carrying out for capturing Vicksburg is right. Along the route of the Mississippi Central was the only safe and hence only proper route for attacking that stronghold. A route essentially different, could afford success only by some chance and a route that can be right only

by chance no good general will adopt. When he reached the Tallahatchie, November 29th, Grant sent a body of cavalry a few miles up the river to cross with the purpose to attack in flank. Pemberton abandoned his fortifications and retreated. Though all had thus far gone well Grant continued to grow nervous. Though he had received the "small re-enforcements" and Sherman's army in addition, he seems more than willing to stop. At last he decided. He submits the question to Halleck. December 3d he telegraphs Halleck: "How far south would you like me to go? Would it not be well to hold the enemy south of the Yallahusha and move with a force *from Helena and Memphis* on Vicksburg? With my present force it would not be prudent to go beyond Grenada and attempt to hold present line of communication." This is a petition for leave to abandon the expedition. At a superficial glance, Grant shows a fickleness not in harmony with his general conduct. He says to Halleck that, with small re-enforcements, we will take Vicksburg by the M. C. R. R. He then tells Sherman he is "able to handle the enemy without gloves." A few days later he changes his mind and orders Sherman to join him, "*if possible*, with three divisions," and this, notwithstanding the fact that his march had been uninterruptedly prosperous. Sherman joins him. Sherman and he were, as military companions, intimate, "two

souls with but a single thought." If Sherman thought him dull, he did not say so. They two took counsel on the situation. They were in sympathy. The civilian, McClelland, had been energetic. It looked as if he would soon be ready for work. Something must be done, and done at once. The plan is changed. The expedition, though an army has just been added to Grant's sufficient force, must be abandoned. December 3, Grant asks leave to abandon it. Not fickleness, but "bull-dog tenacity" was Grant's characteristic. Yet, though he had got re-enforcements in abundance, though Halleck had supported him to the full, though Pemberton had fallen back without firing a shot, Grant shows a strange and increasing nervousness, and at last abandons the expedition.

But what does he do next? On the 5th he telegraphs to Halleck this significant dispatch: "If the Helena troops were *at my command*, I think it would be practicable *to send Sherman* to take them and the Memphis forces south of the mouth of the Yazoo river, and thus secure Vicksburg and the State of Mississippi." This, then, is what the Mississippi Central expedition resulted in — a river expedition *under Sherman*. McClelland's river expedition, Halleck, Grant and Sherman combining, is to be headed off.

Grant's FIRST Attempt to capture Vicksburg is a Failure.

## SECOND ATTEMPT.

Grant is resolved to checkmate McClernand. But to do so he must be quick. On December 7th he asked Halleck, "Do you want me to command the expedition (the one he had proposed to Halleck in his dispatch of the 5th) or shall I send Sherman?" This looks as if he desired the timely removal of a doubt, the timely committal of Halleck in respect to McClernand. Halleck gave him plenary authority, for Halleck, too, hated the civilian. Grant instantly ordered Sherman to take one of his divisions and proceed forthwith to Memphis to organize the expedition in conjunction with Flag Officer Porter. As McClernand was liable to reach Memphis at any time, Sherman was dispatched to Memphis the same day that Grant made the order. The order contained the following language: "I will hold the forces here in readiness to co-operate with you in such manner as the movements of the enemy may make necessary." This shows that Grant's further stay on the M. C. R. R. and further duty were to be merely auxiliary to Sherman. It ought to be added that Grant expected to aid Sherman, that is, to remain where he was and not retreat, for on the 14th he wrote Sherman, still at Memphis, "it would be well if you could have two or three small boats suitable for navigating the Yazoo. It may become

necessary for me to look to that base for supplies before we get through." In spite of Grant's haste, McClelland, zealous and energetic, had got ready. On the 18th Grant was notified from Washington that McClelland would have " *immediate* command of the river expedition under your (Grant's) direction." The fact that McClelland had Lincoln's confidence made it prudent in Grant to pay him proper courtesy. He immediately wrote to McClelland at Springfield, Ill., a becoming letter.

On December 20th, Van Dorn, leading a body of cavalry, dashed in upon Holly Springs, which Grant had made a secondary base of supplies, then commanded by Col. Murphy, of Iuka notoriety, and captured it. The Confederates, after the fashion of military veracity, estimated the stores at \$4,000,000. The next day, Grant began to retreat to the north bank of the Tallahatchie and asked Halleck for leave to send a considerable portion of his command to Memphis and to join the river expedition *in person*. The secret is now clear. The West Point combination, Halleck, Grant and Sherman will succeed. The promptness with which Grant began his retreat and simultaneously asked leave to make a reduction of his army and to join the river expedition in person are noteworthy facts. He had learned shortly after Donelson that Halleck was a martinet whom a subordinate could manage like a child, by tickling his vanity and making



ostentation of submissiveness. That game Grant had played handsomely. Moreover, for the object in view, to checkmate McClelland, Halleck was predisposed. Throughout the war, as a rule, West Pointers fraternized, constituted a Mutual Admiration Society, regarded civilian generals with supercilious disdain, and with an affectation of lofty magnanimity, joined in frowning them down. Halleck, too, had snubbed McClelland, and hence, hated him and knew right well that McClelland would not tickle his vanity and make display of humility. Hence, Halleck and Grant were in sympathy in crowding down McClelland. Residing at Washington and being general-in-chief, it was easy for Halleck to get from the office of the Secretary of War a copy of the order giving McClelland immediate command of the river expedition and to furnish it to Grant. The expedition would be of necessity within the territorial limits of Grant's department. Hence, though McClelland would undoubtedly rank Sherman, it was not so clear that in Grant's department he would rank Grant. At any rate, the department commander and the general-in-chief combined, had a good fighting chance against the civilian. On the 18th Grant was advised from Washington that McClelland was about ready. Something must be done and done quickly. Though Grant had decided in his own mind, as early as December 3d, to abandon the

M. C. R. R. expedition, yet on ordering Sherman to attack by the river at the mouth of the Yazoo, he had pledged the co-operation of his army and had even said, "it may become necessary to look to that base for supplies." Accordingly, three days after notice from Washington that McClernand was about ready, he makes another essential change of plan. He will reduce his army, will quit his army, will order a retreat of his army into Northern Mississippi. Not only does he thus violate his pledge to Sherman of co-operation, but he endangers Sherman's army. Suppose that Sherman, instead of halting two days at Milliken's Bend, had pushed on and had effected a surprise at the mouth of the Yazoo, and, landing without opposition, had advanced into the interior in quest of Grant. Suppose that Pemberton had gathered together all his strength and had pounced upon him in overwhelming numbers, Sherman might have been destroyed. The truth is, Grant's repeated and rapid and fundamental changes of plan are inexplicable on any other idea than that from December 3d he had ceased to fight the Confederates in order to fight McClernand. In his order to strip the Mississippi river of troops by calling Sherman, "with three divisions, *if possible*," to himself; then, after two or three days of companionship with Sherman, sending him back to Memphis in haste to organize a river expedition,

with a pledge to co-operate; then his abandonment of the M. C. R. R. expedition; and, finally, his retreat to Northern Mississippi that he might go in person to Memphis, Halleck swiftly approving every proposed change, — such fickleness proves a disturbing cause outside of military exigencies more powerful than military exigencies. The trio of West Pointers were resolved to destroy McClelland at whatever cost to public interests.

It is commonly understood that the capture of Holly Springs induced Grant's purpose to retreat. Let us see. He knew, and for days and months had known, the agricultural resources of that extremely fertile region. Immediately after Shiloh he had resolved to forage on the country. In his "Life of Grant," Gen. Badeau, a eulogistic biographer and a member of Grant's staff, after describing the battle of Shiloh, says: "From this time, therefore, Grant gave up the idea of saving the property of the South; the South had made the war avowedly one of the people, and the people, being a party to it, *must suffer* until *the people* as well as the soldiers were conquered. Henceforth *he gave his subordinates orders* to live upon the resources of the country *without stint*, whenever their necessities compelled, etc. August 3d, he had orders from Washington "to live upon the country, *on the resources of citizens* hostile to the government *so far as practicable.*"

Badeau relates that, after the Holly Springs capture, the rebel women asked Grant civilly, but exultingly, how he would subsist his army. "But their exultations and smiles were of short continuance when the quiet general informed them that his soldiers would find plenty in their barns and storehouses." Grant himself says that he told them immediately after the Holly Springs affair, "it could not be expected that men with arms in their hands would starve *in the midst of plenty.*" Again he says: "On the 23d, I removed my headquarters back to Holly Springs. The troops were drawn back gradually, but without haste or confusion, *finding supplies abundant.*" The truth is it will not do for Grant or any other man, officer or private, in his army, to deny that from the day the army reached Corinth under Halleck, until it left the State of Mississippi, it found supplies abundant. For the capture of Holly Springs, Grant is blameworthy in placing that post in command of Murphy, who, at Iuka had shown himself unworthy of trust. But the capture was the result of a raid. The place was not held permanently. It was immediately re-occupied by Federal troops. In the extract above quoted Grant himself says that he occupied it with his headquarters three days afterward. It had in fact been captured only through the folly, perhaps cowardice, of Murphy, who had been placed there through the folly of Grant. Its capture then did not necessitate nor in

any sense justify an essential change in plan of campaign and to assert that it was the cause is an effrontery of mendacity. It was seized with avidity as a pretext for such a change, so that Grant might go to Memphis and supersede McClernand.

Let us return to Sherman at Memphis. McClernand had not arrived. It was possible to give him the slip. It is true that, as his arrival was expected, decency required Sherman to await him. But McClernand must not be permitted to be the leader in opening the Mississippi. Sherman made hot haste, embarked at Memphis with 30,000 men, received 12,000 more at Helena, and landed at Milliken's Bend on the west side of the Mississippi, twenty miles above Vicksburg, on the 24th. Committing an error that is amazing, he remained at Milliken's Bend two days. Sherman, Grant's favorite lieutenant, stops and stays two days within twenty miles of Vicksburg. This is West Point generalship! Excuses are given, of course, but too worthless to deserve notice. There doubtless was a good excuse. It was probably this: In his indecent haste to set out on the expedition before McClernand's arrival it is probable that he postponed some necessary arrangements with the purpose of *stopping on the way* to complete his preparatory work. At Milliken's Bend, in the enemy's country, the arrival of 42,000 blue coats would forthwith be communicated by voluntary messengers to Pemberton, who would

proceed to guard all possible points of attack. The lesson afforded by Grant's defeat at Shiloh was lost on Sherman. He did not learn the value of surprise. As a matter of certainty the delay at Milliken's Bend imperiled success; as a matter of possibility and perhaps probability it prevented success. On the 26th Sherman passed down to the mouth of the Yazoo, eight miles above Vicksburg, on transports convoyed by gunboats under Flag Officer Porter, and on the 27th landed on the east or south side of the Yazoo, near the mouth of Chickasaw Bayou. Luckily for the Confederates the Yazoo valley was flooded from a rise in the river, so that it was not easy for an attacking army to find a place of landing. The overflowed river bottom from the current of the Yazoo to the base of the hills averaged three miles wide. A narrow strip of dry land was found extending across this wide stretch of water. The approach which Sherman could occupy was so narrow that not more than a fourth of his army could be engaged. On the slope and crest of the hills the Confederates were fortified impregnably. Attack was hopeless. Sherman blundered horribly. Massena, leading the French army in Portugal, when he found that Wellington's fortifications at Torres Vedras were impregnable, withdrew. It is not generalship to waste human life. Sherman assaulted and was repulsed with heavy slaughter.

Grant's SECOND Attempt on Vicksburg was a Failure.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. This Yazoo enterprise was wrong in its conception. If Grant had pushed on and attacked the enemy where Sherman did, but from the rear, he would have gained an easy victory, or rather, the enemy would not have awaited his attack. He could then have established his base of supplies.

2. The enterprise was wrong in its motive. No general should abandon one enterprise rightly undertaken and in which success has been constant, to engage in another not necessary, of the facts involved in which he is necessarily ignorant and of whose result he must at the best be doubtful, merely from the motive of foiling a rival.

3. Sherman erred amazingly in stopping two days at Milliken's Bend.

4. He erred in making an attack at all.

## CAPTURE OF ARKANSAS POST.

January 2d, on his return from his disastrous expedition, Sherman was met at the mouth of the Yazoo by McClernand who immediately assumed command. Grant had not foiled McClernand; Grant had foiled himself. McClernand proceeded directly to Arkansas Post, a strong Confederate military

post on the Arkansas river about fifty miles above its mouth. After a severe engagement it was taken January 11th, and 5,000 prisoners and 17 pieces of cannon were captured. Here was one of the few cases in which Grant's good sense failed him. That an army just beaten while under command of his favorite, a West Pointer, should be marched straight to victory under his rival, and that rival a mere civilian who necessarily was ignorant of war, was against all rule and was too much to be endured. Grant lost his temper. He censured McClelland and complained to Halleck. Shortly afterward, however, he got new light. Sherman claimed the credit of capturing the post. That changed the case and Grant made no further complaint.

January 16th, Grant established headquarters at Memphis. Then began trouble between him and McClelland. It is probable that, lacking respect for Grant's intellect and appreciating the poverty of his attainments, McClelland did not treat him so submissively as Grant treated his own superior, Halleck. McClelland knew that Grant's service as a company officer when a young man gave him no more occasion than an army teamster had, to consider the important questions of war, that moreover he had been so long out of the army, farming, collecting rents, and selling leather that he had forgotten whatever he may have once known, that his own military knowledge was vastly superior to Grant's,



and that in commanding large bodies and considering and deciding important questions, in camp, on the march and on the field, his experience was greater than Grant's. Grant on the other hand knew "without an unbelieving doubt" that a civilian, whatever his military knowledge, military experience or military success and however strong and disciplined his intellect, was incapable, merely because a civilian, of being a soldier. He knew and every West Pointer knew that the knowledge and skill necessary to capture Vicksburg could be got nowhere but at West Point by a boy in his teens. Though his knowledge had utterly faded from his memory, yet it still gave him a mysterious and magical skill. Venturing to differ, McClelland, as he looked over that vast expanse of overflowed country and its network of rivers, bayous and swamps lying on each side of the Mississippi, saw that a problem was presented greater and more complicated than any academy in the world could teach the solution of and than any boy of eighteen, even though not of low class rank, could learn to solve, and that if by special study and reflection, with perhaps not inferior endowment of mind and capacity to investigate, he had wrought out a rational plan, he might indulge the vanity of believing that he had a right to an opinion.

On McClelland's return from Arkansas Post, elated with victory, and Grant's return from his late

expedition mortified at his failure, each was in a mood to quarrel. McClelland doubtless thought Grant ignorant and dull. Grant thought McClelland a civilian, a marplot and a rival. Grant opened the fight. He sent McClelland a dispatch censuring the capture of Arkansas Post. McClelland was nettled. He answered, "I take the responsibility of the expedition against Post Arkansas and had anticipated your approval of the complete and signal success which crowned it, rather than your condemnation." Grant saw that McClelland was not submissive to be bullied and his hostility was intensified. The fight was now begun. A fortnight afterward it appears that one of McClelland's subordinate officers, unable under McClelland to have his own way as to his camping place, applied, not through the channel prescribed by military law, but directly to Grant on appeal. Grant entertained the appeal. In doing so, he was wrong. He went further and granted the application, sending McClelland an order directing the solicited change to be made. McClelland replied suggesting that the officer, in doing what he had done, was guilty of irregularity. He proceeded to explain fully the fact complained of, namely, why the regiment was encamped where it was and why its removal, as sought, would be unwise. He expressed the opinion that he could not properly be held responsible for the safety of the camp if, by unmilitary methods, his authority was

interfered with, but concluded by a courteous submission to Gen. Grant's order. If McClernand had been wrong, Grant's generosity would have been able to forget it. But as McClernand, a mere civilian, was right, and Grant was wrong and saw that he was wrong, Grant was stung. Having disposed of that matter, McClernand, in his letter, proceeded further. He referred to the order of the Secretary of War giving to himself the *immediate* command of the river expedition and expressed the opinion that all orders from the department commander should pass through his headquarters. "Otherwise, I must lose a knowledge of current events and dangerous confusion ensue. If different views are entertained by you, then the question should be immediately referred to Washington and one or the other or both of us relieved. One thing is certain: two generals cannot command this army, issuing independent and direct orders to subordinate officers and the public service be promoted." Here is a question for the administration to decide. What will be the decision?

Throughout the war politics played an important part. Politics aided Grant. Lincoln was ambitious. He desired to be re-elected. It was to that end that he set afloat the crisp saying: "It is a bad time to swap horses while crossing a stream." Of course he was unwilling to produce a man who would dethrone himself. He accordingly determined not

to be defeated by a gunpowder reputation. He took good care that he should not be and he succeeded. McClelland was known to be a sound lawyer. He had been respectable as a member of Congress. Having been a Democrat, but having resigned his seat in Congress to fight the rebellion, he would be apt to be held in favor by all parties in the North except the peace party. His military career had been signally and uniformly successful. The Belmont blunder was not his and his own part as a subordinate had been brilliant. The success at Fort Donelson, if ever inquired into closely, would be found to be due to him and not to the man in the gunboat. No man displayed more valor or handled his troops with more skill at Shiloh. Lincoln may have suspected McClelland (for "Abe" and "Jack," were jocularly familiar and each knew the other to be ambitious) to have an eye on the Presidency and possibly the suspicion was not groundless. McClelland had conceived and with energy and judgment had organized the river expedition for the capture of Vicksburg. If, after two attempts and two failures by Grant, he should succeed in taking what Davis called the Gibraltar of America and opening the Mississippi and cutting the Confederacy in twain, how would it be possible to prevent his nomination for the Presidency? No other general, so far as Lincoln knew, had conceived such a plan or perhaps had the capacity. Abe had

seen that Jack had studied the problem profoundly and with a mind that knew how to study, that his plan was rational and coherent and his reasonings convincing. Prudence required that Jack be restrained.

Grant's mental caliber was such that Lincoln was not, at least for the present, afraid of him at all. In fact, Grant was holding his own as a military commander only by indulgence. But as for Jack, his career had been brilliant, he had incurred no censure except Grant's censure for a victory and any considerable increase of his gunpowder reputation would make Jack dangerous.

The question of dealing with the slaves or "contrabands," as they were called, became troublesome. Grant saw his chance. In his bitterness he determined to ply politics. Lincoln was a warm friend of the slave. Grant dispatched to Halleck: "At least three of my army corps commanders (meaning Sherman, McPherson and Hurlbut) take hold of the new policy of arming the negroes and using them against the enemy with a will." (Perhaps Grant means "take hold with a will of the new policy," etc.) "They, at least, are so much of soldiers" (implying that the fourth, McClelland, is not "so much of a soldier") "as to feel themselves under obligations," etc. (without stating the number of "obligations").

The dispute between Grant and McClelland was

as simple as language can make it. The order of the Secretary of War, known to the President, because having a statement written on its back in the President's handwriting, provided for an expedition "*under Gen. McClermand's* command against Vicksburg and to clear the Mississippi river to New Orleans." It was no more to be under Grant's command than under Burnside's or Moltke's. But politics and West Point combined were omnipotent. It was decided that the expedition was *not* to be "*under Gen. McClermand's* command," and further that he had no more authority except as corps commander, than Burnside or Moltke.

Grant has succeeded. It has cost him the abandonment of one Vicksburg campaign and the bloody failure of another. How much it is to cost in the future in the actual capture of Vicksburg we shall see. But he has succeeded. Yet not wholly. McClermand still commands a corps. Encouraged by his success in wresting from McClermand the command of the river expedition, Grant determines to go further and strip McClermand of military authority completely. He adopts much the same trick that Halleck had played upon him (Grant) at Pittsburg Landing. He issued order No. 13, by which he charges the 13th corps (McClermand's) with the duty of garrisoning the west bank of the Mississippi. The effect of this would have been to scatter the corps among the multitude of posts along

the river established to guard navigation, and leave him without a command, that is, to shelve him. But Grant mistook his man. His subordinate was not of the same stuff as Halleck's subordinate. McClernand was not a fool, nor was he destitute of manhood. McClernand replied promptly: "It is quite obvious that the whole or a large part of the 13th army corps must be absorbed by these garrisons if the purpose is to afford complete protection to all lawful vessels navigating the river; and thus, while having projected the Mississippi river expedition, and having been by a series of orders assigned to the command of it, I may be entirely withdrawn from it." Again Grant had met his match and been balked. He became more bitter. But he bided his time. He had the ear of Halleck and the sympathy of Halleck. He had politics with him. He was destined to succeed.

## MAKING RIVERS.

---

Grant took command in person of the troops on the Mississippi designed for the capture of Vicksburg January 17, 1863. The entire armed force in his department was not less than 130,000. Between him and Sherman the relations were intimate. They spent much time together discussing the happy hits and the mistakes of the immediate past, the incidents and duties of the current hour and the prospects and plans of the future. In fact, most of the general officers spent frequent evenings at Grant's headquarters. All military topics were discussed freely. It is not exaggeration to say that in all the campaigns a council of war was held every night. But Grant's relations with McClelland were chilly. Few men were better fitted for carrying on one side of a quarrel than Grant. Whatever mind he had was of the good kind. If he never said wise things he rarely said foolish things. And he knew how to hold his tongue. Though this faculty does not constitute greatness, it is sometimes an important factor in usefulness. McClelland had been a successful lawyer and diligent student and knew himself to be



superior in intellect to Grant. He saw, too, that if Grant had ever, as an academy boy, understood the military art, he had forgotten it. Still further, he reflected that he had all of Grant's military experience and more, that he had been in all the battles that Grant had been in and Arkansas Post besides, and that at Donelson and Shiloh his participation had been much greater than Grant's. Superior to Grant in intellect, in learning and in experience, though willing to yield a soldier's obedience, he was not prepared to flatter and would not submit quietly to wrong.

#### THIRD ATTEMPT ON VICKSBURG.

About five miles before reaching Vicksburg the Mississippi turns abruptly to the east, and after pursuing the course of a horseshoe comes back to a point only a mile from the first turn. In other words, the corks of the horseshoe are about a mile apart, and Vicksburg is near the toe. In 1862 Gen. Thomas Williams conceived the novel idea of digging a new bed for the river straight from one cork to the other. But the plan was abandoned. As soon as Grant took command he instantly ordered McClelland to resume the work. But by and by it became apparent that even if he succeeded in making a new bed for the river and then in getting the water to flow in it, the Confederates, though

unable to transfer their town, might transfer their batteries. That is exactly what they did. They planted powerful batteries on the cliff overlooking the outlet of the proposed new channel and thus controlled it. For dreary weeks Federal troops were toiling in mud and water and malaria in making a river. Camp dysentery, diarrhea, measles, small-pox and other diseases prevailed. Thousands died. What was the result? March 8 the river broke the upper dam of the new channel and the flood swept madly down and over the surrounding country. The camps of the soldiers were flooded. Horses and mules were drowned, tents, tools, baggage, guns, provisions, everything was swept away by the rushing torrent. The disaster was immense. But what was worse, it was found that even if the channel were fully completed it would be ineffectual to divert the water from the old bed, and so the latter part of March the scheme was abandoned.

Grant's THIRD Attempt upon Vicksburg was a Failure.

#### FOURTH ATTEMPT.

The Yazoo, a navigable stream, is formed by the confluence of the Tallahatchie and Yallabusha, and flowing in a southerly direction, empties into the Mississippi about five miles north of Vicksburg. If Grant could pass with his fleet from the Mississippi into the Tallahatchie and Yazoo, he could trans-

port his army down the Yazoo, take Haines' Bluff in the rear and sweep down upon Vicksburg by the M. C. R. R., the route he had previously abandoned. Between the Mississippi and the Yazoo are several navigable rivers and bayous, the Sunflower, Cold Water, Deer Creek, Steele's Bayou, etc. Many of these connect with one another, forming a network of bodies of water, in some places easily navigable, in other places obstructed by willows, cypress and other aquatic growths. Yazoo Pass, nearly a hundred feet wide, connects the Mississippi with Moon Lake, which in turn is connected by a like pass with Cold Water River, a tributary of the Tallahatchie. If boats could reach the Tallahatchie, it was supposed that they could pass down the Yazoo. Some years before the war the State of Mississippi, in order to rescue millions of acres of uncommonly fertile land from annual and destructive inundation, had constructed a broad levee across the mouth of Yazoo Pass. The first necessity was to destroy this levee. The engineers mined it. February 2d the mine was fired. At once two gunboats with twenty-five transports and about 5,000 troops pushed for Moon Lake and the Yazoo River. But Pemberton had not been asleep. The Confederates felled big trees into the pass and while the Federals were engaged in sawing up and removing the trees, Confederates plied their rifles. At last, however, March 2d, the flotilla reached the open stream of Cold Water.

Grant was elated. He issued orders which contemplated the immediate removal to the Tallahatchie of a considerable portion of his army, showing that he himself still regarded his original route by the M. C. R. R. as the proper one. He directed Quimby's command, one division of Hurlbut's corps and McPherson's entire corps to follow the expedition. But his rejoicing and his orders were premature. Only two or three miles below the junction of the Tallahatchie and Yallahusha, forming the Yazoo, is situated the little town of Greenwood, which on account of a horseshoe bend in the Yazoo, stands on a peninsula that at its narrowest point is less than five hundred yards wide. At that point the Confederates had erected a fort called Fort Pemberton. A rise in the river, timely for the Confederates, had overflowed this peninsula to such an extent as to leave the fort on an island. As a consequence the Federal infantry were quite valueless. The gunboats attacked March 11th, but were worsted badly. The Federal commander found the expedition to be hopeless. He abandoned it. Grant countermanded his orders.

Grant's FOURTH Attempt was a Failure.

#### FIFTH ATTEMPT.

Grant organized a fleet composed of his most strongly built boats, and on March 14th, himself

accompanying for some miles, it started through the network of navigable bodies of water lying near the mouth of the Yazoo. Porter was in command of the fleet, and Grant sent Sherman to follow by land and support it. Porter's route was to ascend Steele's Bayou into Black Bayou, Black Bayou into Deer Creek, Deer Creek into Rolling Fork, Rolling Fork into Sunflower River, Sunflower River into Yazoo. Grant is still making for his original M. C. R. R. route. The abandonment of that route to baffle McClernand—how tremendously it cost the country! The passage was difficult to the last degree. Sometimes, with twenty-four hours of incessant toil, the fleet would gain but three or four miles. At last, on the 19th, Porter found himself within half a mile of Rolling Fork, in which he would have comparatively good navigation. But next morning, while his men were pulling up aquatic trees that crowded the bed of Deer Creek, he was suddenly fired upon by a battery. The enemy was there in force and in desperate mood. Some were felling trees into the creek in front to prevent advance; some in felling trees in rear to block retreat. Though the face of the country is flat, the banks of the streams are so high that the gunboat cannon could not, at so close a range, shoot above them. Meanwhile the enemy's cannon was pouring in a plunging fire. Porter saw destruction staring him in the face. He instantly

ordered a retreat. The narrowness of the creek forbade his boats to turn around, and he had to retreat stern foremost. The woods abounded with Confederate sharpshooters who, secreted in the bushes, picked off any Federal who exposed himself an instant. In the course of the day Porter found that the enemy had sunk across the creek an old coal barge which obstructed his way entirely and made retreat impossible. Porter saw at once the grim necessity. A rhetorician would here grow eloquent and talk about flashes of genius. A plain man would only say that Porter showed himself a man of sense and of promptness. He was on the point of ordering an abandonment of his fleet, with the purpose to attempt to cut his way back by land, when fresh shots in the woods in his rear arrested his attention. It was Sherman. Sherman had been apprised of Porter's peril and had pushed forward, sometimes up to the waist in swamps, and reached the spot just in the nick of time. The expedition was abandoned.

Grant's FIFTH Attempt on Vicksburg was a Failure.

#### SIXTH ATTEMPT.

Within a mile or two west of the Mississippi far north of Vicksburg lies a body of water called Lake Providence. Grant determined to make a river by which the Mississippi would run into that

lake, which, if a succession of rivers should be made, would run into Bayou Baxter, which would run into Bayou Macon, which would run into Macon river, which would run into Tensas river, which would run into Washita river, which would run into Red river, which would run into the Mississippi river. The distance of the route from the point on the Mississippi nearest to Lake Providence around by innumerable and intricate tortuosities to the mouth of the Red river, can only be vaguely conjectured, but would probably be six hundred to a thousand miles. The network of bayous is of varying width and depth and chiefly connected with one another by miles on miles of swamps filled with aquatic trees and millions of fallen trees. January 30th, Grant ordered McPherson to destroy the Mississippi levee at Lake Providence, and clear out the route. It would be tedious and probably uninteresting to detail the toil, the cost, the murmuring, the sickness, the death which these successive enterprises cost. The project was abandoned.

Infectious diseases prevailed and committed horrible ravages. The Mississippi levees were the only lands above water and they were filled with dead soldiers. The medical department seems to have become hopeless, disgusted, and worthless. Discontent and recklessness were universal. Grant, it is true, asserted to Halleck that the *morale* of the

army was good. He either knew better, or else he didn't. It is possible that he didn't know better. It was in grief and alarm at the state of affairs that Murat Halstead wrote to Mr. Secretary Chase the following letter: —

“ CINCINNATI, Feb. 19, 1863.

“ MY DEAR SIR: I wrote you a somewhat fantastic letter the other day. But that I suppose is not now strange. I write you this morning to send you a copy of a private letter I have from our army in front of Vicksburg. It is from a close observer who endeavors to tell the truth: ‘ There never was a more thoroughly disgusted, disheartened, demoralized army than this is, and all because it is under such men as Grant and Sherman. Disease is decimating its ranks, and while hundreds of poor fellows are dying of small-pox and every other conceivable malady, the medical department is afflicted with *delirium tremens*. In Memphis small-pox patients are made to walk through the streets from camps to hospitals while drunken doctors ride from bar-rooms in government ambulances. \* \* \* How is it that Grant, who was behind at Fort Henry, drunk at Donelson, surprised and whipped at Shiloh and driven back from Oxford, Miss., is still in command?’

“ Governor Chase, *these things are true*. Our noble army of the Mississippi is being wasted by



the foolish, drunken, stupid Grant. He can't organize or control or fight an army. I have no personal feeling about it; but I know he is an ass. There is not among the whole list of retired Major Generals a man who is not Grant's superior. McClellan, Fremont, McDowell, Burnside, Franklin, even Pope or Sumner would be an improvement upon the present commander of the army of the Mississippi. \* \* \* What is wanted: 1. A general for the army of the Mississippi.

“M. HALSTEAD.”

The worst feature of the demoralization was that the army had the same opinion of Grant that Halstead and his correspondent had. Among the soldiers the remark was that “if you hit Rawlins on the head you'll knock Grant's brains out.” Things grew worse daily. Drunkenness increased. Recklessness increased. Foolish plans were adopted and abandoned to be followed by foolisher plans. About the last of March McPherson was ordered to abandon the Lake Providence folly.

Grant's SIXTH Attempt on Vicksburg was a Failure.

## MARCH TO VICKSBURG.

---

April 4th, 1863, Grant wrote to Halleck, setting forth still a new plan. "There is a system of bayous running from Milliken's Bend, also from near the river at this point (Young's Point), that are navigable for large and small steamers, passing around by Richmond to New Carthage (a town on the west bank of the Mississippi). There is also a good wagon road from Milliken's Bend to New Carthage. The dredges are now engaged in cutting a canal from here into these bayous. I am having all the empty coal boats and other barges prepared for carrying troops and artillery, and have written to Col. Allen for some more, and also for six tugs to tow them. With these it would be easy to carry supplies to New Carthage and any point south of that. My expectation is for some of the naval fleet to run the batteries of Vicksburg whilst the army marches through this new route. Once there, I will move to Warrenton or Grand Gulf, probably the latter." Orders had been issued a few days before for the concentration of all the forces at Milliken's Bend. In the march to New Carthage, McClernand

was assigned to take the advance, the post of peril, the post requiring mind, courage and military skill, requiring, in fact, high capacity for independent command. McPherson's corps was to follow at some interval of time and afterward Sherman. The road lay on the west side of Roundaway Bayou and from having been long submerged, was very bad. McClermand set out March 29th. April 6th, with one division and its artillery, he occupied New Carthage. On account of a break in the levee and a consequent overflow of the surrounding country, this division, for some miles just before reaching New Carthage, had to be transported in skiffs, collected from neighboring bayous. Even by this route 2,000 feet of bridge had to be built. McClermand saw that the transportation for some miles of as large an army as Grant's in skiffs would be interminable, to say nothing of artillery and trains. Besides, in a few days the water might be too low even for skiffs, yet too much for land transportation. He showed his fitness to command the advance. He was for the time in independent command, marching on a route unexplored, encountering obstacles unforeseen and unprecedented and braving perils unknown. He promptly made exploration and found a road leading down to an accessible landing at Perkins', about twelve miles below, to which point he transferred his corps.

But if Grant's army was to land on the east bank

of the Mississippi it must have means of crossing. On the night of April 16, nearly three weeks after McClernand had been started from Milliken's Bend, Admiral Porter, with seven iron-clads, three steam-boats and ten barges, appeared in front of Vicksburg. For two hours and forty minutes the fleet was under fire from the batteries extending from Vicksburg down to Warrenton. If in running this long gauntlet of batteries they had failed, what would have been McClernand's condition? The Henry Clay was burned. The rest of the fleet reached New Carthage, damaged but capable of speedy repair. Grant desired to attack Grand Gulf. But the boats that had passed Vicksburg were the only conveyance, and they were quite inadequate. There were so few, as compared with the size of the army, and the distance from Perkins' to Grand Gulf by the tortuous course of the river was so great, that it would be madness to attempt to cross the army. The Confederates would want nothing better than to have a fleet load landed to be beaten and captured while the fleet was returning for another load. Accordingly, April 29, Grant moved McClernand by the west side of Lake Joseph down to Hard Times, twenty-two miles further south.

One is embarrassed to discover why Grant did not find it proper to accompany McClernand in his march from Milliken's Bend. Nothing of the slightest importance required his presence there.

Sherman, his favorite, was there. To him he could and did confide the management of affairs there — which, in truth, as Grant then thought, consisted only in following McClernand. As McClernand was marching into a *terra incognita*, possibly full of peril and containing obstacles against which, because unknown, no instructions could be given, and as McClernand's failure would determine the failure of the enterprise, it would seem that here was a time, if ever there was a time, when the general should have led his army. But Grant always showed diffidence in himself as a field commander. At any rate, if McClernand is sent alone and achieves success Grant will take care, not as a generous but as a just superior, that McClernand shall have the applause due to success.

The river bottom on the east side of the river was overflowed, and it was no easy thing to find a landing. But it was still less easy to find a landing from which there was a road not submerged to the upland. Grand Gulf was such a place. On the 12th Grant wrote to McClernand: "It is my desire that you get possession of Grand Gulf at the earliest practical moment." On the 13th, at Perkins': "It is not desirable that you should move in any direction from Grand Gulf, but *remain* under the protection of the gunboats. The present plan, if not changed by the movements of the enemy, will be to *hold* Grand Gulf." As McClernand was many

a mile from Grand Gulf the meaning of either of the above sentences is not obvious. On the 18th Grant, being now with McClernand for three or four days, wrote to him: "I would still repeat former instructions, that possession be got of Grand Gulf at the earliest possible moment." Again: "I will be over here in a few days again, and hope it will be my good fortune to find you in possession of Grand Gulf." It is noticeable that, whether absent or even on the ground, Grant makes no order, but confines himself to expressions of wish. Now three questions: First, considering the great distance by the windings of the river from McClernand at Perkins' Landing to Grand Gulf and the smallness of the fleet, would Grant have advised an attempt to cross the army, fleet-load by fleet-load, into the presence of an enemy of unknown strength? Secondly, as some of these dispatches were written when Grant was actually on the ground at Perkins' Landing, why did he not give a distinct military order instead of indulging in mere expressions of desire? Thirdly, is it possible that by withholding a positive order, but worrying McClernand with repetitions of a wish, it was Grant's purpose either to lay the ground for subsequent complaint for disobedience, or at least inefficiency, or else to lead McClernand, whom he had placed in advance, into some disaster by which he would be disgraced?

Hard Times is almost opposite Grand Gulf.

Grant directed that Grand Gulf be attacked by the gunboat fleet. The attack was begun in the morning and continued till afternoon. It was repulsed. What then shall be said of Grant's repeated suggestion (but without an order) to attack Grand Gulf? Only this, that McClelland did not choose, unless under an order, to attack and be beaten, while Grant attacked and gave the enemy a victory. With whom, then, is the superior skill as a commander? Here is a place where that question can be asked and where it should be answered. Grant's eulogists assert by implication that when McClelland was first advised to attack, Grand Gulf was not defended. The implied assertion is false. When Grant gave the enemy the victory of Grand Gulf, it had been occupied one month.

The night after the attack and repulse at Grand Gulf, the fleet ran the battery. The army was then marched still further south on the west bank to the De Shroons. Grant had learned that at a plantation called Bruinsburg, on the east bank, there was not only a good landing but also a road leading to Port Gibson, on the upland, twelve miles distant. De Shroon and Bruinsburg were so near each other that the crossing was quick work. Immediately after crossing McClelland started for Port Gibson. Two miles before reaching that place he met a force of the enemy, under Gen. John S. Bowen, posted in a position unusually advantageous. This

was on the night of April 30th, or rather after midnight. Bowen's command had been the garrison of Grand Gulf and he saw that if Grant got into the rear of that place its evacuation became a necessity. At daylight on the morning of May 1st, McClelland delivered battle. It was fierce. About 10 a. m., Grant reached the field and assumed command. Bowen was largely inferior numerically, and he was beaten. He ought not to have fought the battle at all. At the close of the battle, a common friend of Grant and McClelland went to Grant and represented that from the time McClelland left Milliken's Bend he had been acquitting himself handsomely, to Grant's credit, and that now would be a good hour for a reconciliation. Grant declined. He is now safe below Vicksburg and established on the east bank of the river. How much of this success he owes to McClelland is nothing to the purpose. To have the rest of his army follow McClelland is a trifling job. Vicksburg is now within his grasp. He will soon be in high feather. Then he will easily find an occasion, or else make one, to destroy the civilian general. He declined.

For long months Grant, with Halleck's sympathy and aid, had been trying to destroy McClelland whom they both hated. Grant omitted no opportunity to cast a slur upon him. He took good care to charge no specific act, even an act indicating



ignorance or weakness merely, but he indulged in vague statements and disparaging opinions. About his own headquarters he easily caused McClernand to be spoken of disparagingly, for the commander of an army holds despotic authority, and his satellites will reflect brightly whatever hue of light their central luminary sheds. Having thus manufactured a headquarters public opinion he could report it to Washington without fear of being contradicted. Not much different was it that the wolf in the fable muddied the water of the branch and then killed the lamb drinking below because the water was muddy. Maj. Gen. Frank P. Blair, then a friend and supporter of Grant, as well as an able commander, yet a friend also of fair play, learned, not confidentially but from open and habitual talk at Grant's headquarters, at Young's Point, that McClernand's fate was fixed. As a man of honor he thought it due to a fellow-soldier to put him on his guard, and accordingly took the pains to go up to Milliken's Bend, but failed to see McClernand. As early as January 20th Grant wrote to Halleck: "I regard it as my duty to state that there was not sufficient confidence felt in Gen. McClernand as a commander either by the army or navy (the wolf fable) to insure him success." All West Pointers would have supported this statement. February 1st Grant wrote to Halleck: "If *Gen. Sherman* had been left in command here, such is my confidence

in him, that I would not have thought *my* presence necessary! But whether I do injustice to Gen. McClermand or not I have not confidence in his ability as a soldier to conduct an expedition of the magnitude of this successfully." All of which means that he had confidence in Sherman who had just lost a battle, and by a horrible blunder, and has no confidence in McClermand who had just gained a battle, and that Grant is determined to command the river expedition.

Two remarks are here pertinent. First, if such was Grant's opinion of McClermand, then in placing him in command of the advance and in independent command in the march to the south of Vicksburg, the whole enterprise depending absolutely on his success, Grant deliberately sacrificed public interests. Second, if in assigning McClermand to that duty, Grant was faithful to public interests, then the above statements of his opinion were false.

Grant had made First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth successive attempts on Vicksburg, followed by First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth successive failures. This was too much. The people of the North did not at all understand the full extent of Grant's mismanagement, as they do not now. But they murmured. Sickness was in the army. The mortality was frightful. At last Grant began to see that without speedy success he would not longer be tolerated. He had succeeded at least

in one thing, — he had robbed McClermand of the command of the river expedition. He seems to have resolved that if he fell, the civilian should also fall. To be himself prostrated and the civilian afterward triumph, was a humiliation he would not endure. He plans this expedition and puts McClermand in advance. If McClermand succeeds he himself will get the honor, will withhold credit from McClermand, and can afterward ruin him. If, however, McClermand fails, the failure will be McClermand's and McClermand will be ruined. The project he conceived was conceived in desperation. It was a project hazardous to the last degree, un-military and was opposed stoutly by his corps commanders, even by his favorite, Sherman. It was a project that must meet with difficulties that could not be foreseen, and hence could not be provided against, a project that, in order to succeed, must have an uninterrupted run of luck, a project depending on amazing weakness in the adversary, a project in which with moderate sagacity and enterprise in the adversary, the Federal advance would almost infallibly be annihilated. Even Badaeu admits "only the most complete and speedy victory could insure him against annihilation." It was a project in which he was unwilling to risk in advance his favorite Sherman or his own person, but in which he placed his enemy, McClermand. Such a project no intelligent general will ever adopt except

in desperation. The destruction of a corps may not have given him much concern. At no period of his career did he regard human life. His generalship was Falstaffian. "Tut, tut, good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better; tush, man, mortal men, mortal men."

Let us consider the new plan. He orders his advance to cut loose practically from the base of supplies and march into a region incapable, on account of overflow, of subsisting an army for a day, with his flank exposed to the enemy, the means of transporting the army from the west to the east bank totally problematical, with a probability of the fleet being destroyed while running batteries from Vicksburg to Warrenton. It cannot be doubted that even Grant saw the desperateness of the move. But he saw too that it was that or nothing.

"This push  
Will chair me ever or disseat me now."

With a refinement of malice he put McClelland in advance. Am I challenged to produce evidence that the assignment was unfriendly? I accept the challenge. Grant for months had been, then was, and till he finally drove McClelland from the army, continued to be, unfriendly to McClelland. He poisoned his own headquarters and Halleck against McClelland. He robbed McClelland of the com-

mand of the expedition, even at the cost of abandoning his own M. C. R. R. expedition and of instituting Sherman's expedition. He tried to break up McClelland's corps. After McClelland's brilliant and daring march in reaching Hard Times and making Grant's desperate undertaking successful, Grant, with a rankness and vulgarity of ingratitude never, I venture to assert, surpassed and rarely paralleled in military history, refused him one syllable of credit. After the victory at Port Gibson, when he was asked to be reconciled to McClelland, he flatly refused. Could the assignment have been friendly? Grant had studiously, at his own headquarters and at Halleck's headquarters, disparaged McClelland's military skill; yet with Sherman and McPherson at his elbow and himself refusing to accompany, he assigns McClelland to the post of unknown difficulty and danger, a post requiring the highest military skill? Finding that McClelland's luck and skill succeeded, Grant, resolved not to be cheated out of his prey, seizes upon a petty breach of propriety, scarcely deserving more than a laughing reprimand, but converting even that into the basis of a false charge and drives him from the military profession. Is not all this evidence of unfriendliness? If it is not, there is an end of inquiry into the motives of human conduct.

Merely to march down afterward as McPherson and Sherman did, was nothing. But to lead an army

day after day into the enemy's country, encountering unknown difficulties, beset by unknown perils, to meet miles of field and forest overflowed and to be obliged to sweep the ponds and bayous for skiffs to transport an army, to find it impracticable to reach the point and to assume the responsibility of proceeding a dozen miles below, to build bridging by the mile, to be ignorant in starting out each morning whether the enemy in superior force might not strike his flank or fall in on his rear, and by hemming him in among bayous and swamps, destroy him, to reflect that a petty force on his rear could force starvation or surrender, to know that every step was a step in the dark, and that his commander was seeking his ruin, — to discharge such a duty was no light thing. "Such is my confidence in Gen. Sherman," that surely he and only he would have been thought able for this high trust. But Sherman remains quietly in camp. "I have not confidence in his (McClelland's) ability as a soldier" to let him lie in camp, and therefore he places him in command of the advance. Grant himself sits at his desk and smokes his cigar.

At this point another question is pertinent. Let us for the moment forget low rank in the Academy class, and hence failure during school-boy life to comprehend any study, some years passed as a company officer, some years in farming, some years in collecting rents, and some years in selling leather, awls and

shoemaker's wax; let us suppose good scholarship and distinct recollection of all that was taught in the school to the schoolboys, the question is, of what avail could that possibly have been to the commander of the advance corps on this march through an expanse of overflowed country? What can West Point at its best do in such an enterprise?

Reverting to Grant's temerity in adopting this flank mode of attack on Vicksburg, I can recall no march in military history equal to it in folly. The nearest approach is in Blücher's march in eastern France in 1814. After Napoleon's defeat at La Rothiere, his prospects were gloomy. Blücher and Schwartzenberg confronted him with overwhelming force. The Congress of the allies, then sitting at Chatillon, were rising in their demands. Napoleon had become despondent and had written to M. Caulaincourt, his agent at the Congress, authorizing him to sign a peace on any terms, in other words, giving him a *carte blanche*. Even such was Napoleon's condition. As to mere intellect Blücher was one of the weakest men that ever commanded a large army. But at Katzbach, owing to a torrent of rain and flooding of creeks, he had destroyed McDonald and was in repute. He conceived the foolhardy purpose of pushing straight for Paris. Napoleon lay between him and Paris and a full day's march south of his route. Hence he would expose his flank to Napoleon exactly as Grant

exposed his to Pemberton. Blücher's strategy was contemptible; but what did Blücher know of strategy? For convenience of march he separated his army as Grant did. Blücher was in the enemy's country as Grant was. Napoleon was among his own people as Pemberton was. Hence Napoleon was informed immediately of the enemy's movement, as doubtless, Pemberton was of Grant's. Napoleon took heart. He knew — he did not conjecture, he *knew* what would come of Blücher's stolid stupidity and ignorance of strategy.

“I am on the eve,” he wrote, “of beating Blücher. He is advancing on the road to Montmirail. I am about to set off. I will beat him to-morrow. I will beat him the day after to-morrow.” Such was the absoluteness of Napoleon's confidence in the triumph of mind over ignorance and stupidity that he immediately directed his secretary to write another dispatch to M. Caulaincourt setting forth that he was about to destroy Blücher, and to withdraw the *carte blanche*. On taking the dispatch to sign it he added in his own handwriting: “Sign nothing; sign nothing.” (*Ne signez rien; ne signez rien.*) Next day, February 10th, at Champaubert, he struck one of Blücher's corps under Olsouvieff and crushed it. On the 11th he struck Sacken's corps at Montmirail and crushed it. On the 12th he struck and drove back D'Yorck. On the 14th he beat Blücher himself unmercifully. In



all these engagements he killed and captured 28,000 men out of Blücher's 60,000, and a few days afterward Parisian hearts were gladdened by the spectacle of 18,000 prisoners of war promenading on the boulevard.

How does Blücher's march differ from Grant's? It will be kept in mind that though all river bottoms in the region where Grant was operating were subject to overflow, yet at irregular intervals these bottoms are cut by transverse ridges, above high water, running back from the river to the hills. Sherman found such a ridge at Chickasaw Bayou. There is one at Congo Island, one at Grand Gulf, one at Bruinsburg. Pemberton had hundreds of men in his command who knew the road over which McClelland marched and every foot of land between that road and the river, and hence could guide troops from some point on the river to that road. The Vicksburg and Shreveport Railroad would of itself have sufficed to enable Pemberton to strike McClelland's flank or fall in on his rear and destroy him more effectually than Napoleon destroyed Olsouvieff. There is not a military mind in Christendom that does not condemn Blücher's march as unmilitary, as showing a disgraceful ignorance of strategy. Grant's success in flanking Vicksburg was due to interrupted luck and to the amazing weakness of his adversary, neither of which a capable general will rely upon.

In one respect Grant's march was more unwise, infinitely more unwise, than Blücher's. Blücher's march was in open country. If attacked and beaten there was room in all directions for retreat. Though Napoleon beat in every engagement he did not capture one army bodily. With McClelland the case was different. If even a petty force with even a petty supply of artillery had fallen in on his rear his numerical superiority, having a line of battle only across the width of the road, would not have availed. Besides, there would have been but one line of retreat, namely, further south; that is, further from supplies, further into an overflowed and destitute region, further toward starvation.

Grant's strategy stands unique in military history in not being able to endure the adversary's interference without fatality.

Having reference not to Grant's wisdom in ordering the march, but to McClelland's merit in making it, what shall be said? Such a march, as a military act, is to be estimated, not so much by what, through an adversary's weakness, is actually done, but chiefly for its possible contingencies, for the hazards dared. I know of not one march in military history comparable with it. Its possible contingencies were innumerable. Its possible hazard was destruction. These two sentences sum up the case. Sherman's vaunted march to the sea was nothing compared with this. Sherman knew the Confederacy to be at that

time "a hollow shell." He moved with an overwhelming force. He moved in the open country. He moved in the midst of supplies. He moved, not the prey to all possibilities, but superior to all possibilities. No enemy threatened him. No enemy dared threaten him. A regiment of women armed with broomsticks could have made the march. Yet the march to the sea was celebrated in eloquence and song. It brought Sherman fame and promotion. Praise of Sherman was on every tongue. For a successful march, so much superior that they cannot be compared, who commended McClernand? Obviously it was the duty of Grant, not merely in generosity but in justice, not merely in justice but in decency, to begin the applause. McClernand's success redeemed Grant's hitherto unsuccessful campaign against Vicksburg, saved Grant from threatened disgrace, gave Grant fame. What did Grant say? Not one word. There was no congratulatory order commending McClernand. There was no congratulatory letter written to McClernand and handed to the press. There was no report to the President nor to Halleck praising McClernand. Nay, after McClernand had by a victory planted himself firmly on the hills of Port Gibson and Grant is asked to speak to him his answer is, No. One is reminded of Jim Fisk's homely characterization of Grant years afterward.

The job is done. McClernand has gone over the

route and made it, and has got secure military possession of Port Gibson. It is easy for McPherson and Sherman to follow. To capture Vicksburg is now a thing of course.

Gen. N. P. Banks was in command of the Federal forces at New Orleans. With a fleet under Farragut he could ascend the river as far as Port Hudson. But that place was strongly fortified and garrisoned. It had been the plan of both Grant and Halleck to unite, as soon as possible, the forces of Grant and Banks in an attack on Port Hudson. After its capture it would be easy, with New Orleans as a base, to take Vicksburg. Grant had not only this distinct understanding with Halleck, but he even corresponded on the subject, through Halleck's headquarters, with Banks himself. April 11th, Grant, at Milliken's Bend, says to Halleck: "Grand Gulf is the point at which I expect to strike and send an army corps to Port Hudson to co-operate with Banks." April 12th, from Milliken's Bend: "There is nothing in the way now of my throwing troops into Grand Gulf and destroying the works there, and then sending them on to Port Hudson to co-operate with Gen. Banks in the reduction of that place but the danger of overflowing the road from here to New Carthage." April 14th, from Milliken's Bend to Banks: "I am concentrating my forces at Grand Gulf. Will send an army corps to Bayou Sara by the 25th to co-operate with you on Port Hudson."

But a significant fact springs into view. Banks was older in commission than Grant, and hence if Port Hudson had been captured, and Halleck had ordered, as it was certain he would, a union of the two armies, Banks would command. This must not be. The order of Halleck and the promise to both Halleck and Banks, must go for naught. Yet a refusal to co-operate with Banks would be, as to Halleck, insubordination, and since his bout after Donelson, he had been fulsome in his professions of subordination. There was but one mode of procedure and that mode he adopted. He cut loose from communication with Washington.

Having got his army concentrated on the east bank at Port Gibson, his course was so obvious that there was hardly room for anything that deserves to be called generalship; though it ought to be added that Grant managed well. The Confederate force guarding Vicksburg was divided into two parts, one part at Vicksburg and one at Jackson, forty miles east. To interpose and then fight them in detail was obviously the proper course. Grant struck north. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, just up from a sick bed at Tullahoma, had telegraphed that he would reach Jackson on the 13th. To gain time till Johnston's arrival was important. Hours were valuable. Gen. Gregg, with a small force, posted himself strongly at Raymond and checked and delayed McPherson's corps for several hours. This

affair has been foolishly reported as a battle. But the delay proved sufficient. On Johnston's arrival at Jackson he found his forces utterly inadequate for resistance. Grant, with Sherman and McPherson, appeared before Jackson on the morning of the 14th. Johnston was wily. The question was whether he could save his little army and *materiel*. He accordingly made a big show of battle and paraded his artillery while all hands were busy in shipping troops and supplies northward to Canton. A friendly rain aided him in gaining hours. He outwitted Grant and saved his army. If Grant had been as sagacious as his adversary, he would have thrown cavalry to the east and north of Jackson and bagged Johnston. Grant started for Vicksburg, leaving Sherman to destroy railroads, burn bridges, factories, etc., a work in which Sherman had ability. Johnston had sent to Pemberton an order to join him with his command at Canton. If the latter had obeyed promptly he would have saved his army. But Pemberton was not a man for independent command. May 16th he fought Grant at Champion's Hill, handling his army feebly and was badly beaten. The battle of Champion's Hill and Chattanooga were the only two battles in which Grant was fully the commander and in which he was victorious. Pemberton's men began to lose confidence in their leadership, and loss of confidence demoralizes. He retreated to the Big Black and

there took up a strong position. On the morning of the 17th, McClernand, Grant's advance, came upon the enemy. After reconnoitering and observation, McClernand ordered a charge on what seemed to be a weak point. The attack was successful and the enemy fled. Grant had no further trouble in reaching Vicksburg and investing it. He at once cleared the bank of the Yazoo of its Confederate troops and fortifications and opened a base of supplies at its mouth. Two small battles had been fought, Port Gibson and Champion's Hill. McClernand chiefly commanded at the former. Grant at the latter.

Grant invested Vicksburg on the 19th and ordered an assault. He was repulsed. On the morning of the 22d he ordered an assault at exactly 10 a. m. along the whole line, for Grant never sought weak points to be massed upon nor attempted maneuvers. This assault, too, was repulsed. An hour or so afterwards, McClernand reported that he occupied the enemy's works at one or more points and desired re-enforcements and attack on other parts of the enemy's line as diversion. It turns out that McClernand was not mistaken. The successes, it is true, were not important ones, nor did McClernand claim that they were. They may easily be belittled by little minds. But they were successes and nowhere else had there been successes. Grant says: "I occupied a position from which I believed

I could see as well as he what took place, and I did not see the success he reported." He ordered another assault which was unsuccessful. The propriety of a general commanding ordering a general assault, when he himself sees that the subordinate requesting it is mistaken as to facts, is open to doubt. It looks like an abdication of authority. But it is certain that in such case it is not a very brave act in the superior, the renewed assault being unsuccessful, to shift the responsibility to the inferior. Some days afterward McClelland issued a congratulatory order to his corps, recounting their successes and commending their valor. The issuance of such orders is common. Napoleon did it often. But they are especially suited to the American character, North and South. The genuine American loves to be told how great his virtues are and what great things he has done. He expects too the language of exaggeration. There are sorts of literature in which exaggeration is usual, and in some sense is proper. Who believes a eulogy or a tombstone? In such literature it is understood that the best is stated, that it is stated a little strongly and that everything not the best is suppressed. To say that such was the fact in the case of McClelland's order is simply to say that it was a congratulatory order. It was designed, as such orders and proclamations in all ages have been designed, to encourage and reanimate the troops.



Grant had issued such an order after Donelson and another after Shiloh. But it appears that during the preceding year an order had been issued prohibiting the publication by subordinates of "official letters and reports." There was propriety in this. A subordinate might through inadvertence or the inspiration of mint juleps publish facts that would aid the enemy. Besides, Grant might also object to a publication of facts respecting his own behavior, such as occurred at Donelson and at Shiloh. But it is sufficient to say that McClelland's paper, whether foolish or not and whether untrue or not, was neither an official letter nor a report. Consider, moreover, the character of the order alleged to have been violated. An order for a prescribed movement or act the subordinate is bound to remember at his peril. But such an order refers to the immediate future with definiteness, is connected with events now in progress and needs instant action taken or plans formed or modified for its observance. But an order merely referring to etiquette and not of frequent application, and of which the question of observance is one lying in the indefinite future, and hence taking no hold on the mind, may well be forgotten by the best officer. Especially may such an order be forgotten in the rush of so perilous a campaign as McClelland had known since the 29th of March. To forget a substantive military order is bad, but is sometimes excused; to forget an order

of mere military etiquette is venial. To make much of its violation shows littleness of mind, if not malignity. Such an order is less apt to be remembered by a chief justice than by a dancing master, by an able military commander than by a military fop. Sherman remembered the order and made haste to point it out to Grant, but failed to show, as it was impossible to show, that McClelland had violated it. He declared that the order contained "an untruth" "of monstrous falsehood."

Grant caught at the opportunity. He had bided his time. The hour had at last come. His rival shall be destroyed. There had been no offense, for the document was an order, not an "official letter or report." But even the offense alleged, if it had been an offense, might well have been overlooked or dismissed with a pleasant reprimand. But malice will now do its work. Not a more disgraceful act of arbitrary power can be found in military history than that by which Grant drove McClelland, without a hearing, from the military service.

Grant had abundance of good engineers in his army, and Vicksburg was speedily in a state of siege. He would have occupied the same spot the preceding December if, forgetting McClelland, he had not abandoned his M. C. R. R. expedition. The siege was continued till July 4th, when Pemberton surrendered on terms. Grant agreed as the terms of surrender to release Pemberton's command

on parole. This was a grievous mistake. Pemberton's army had been starving. Grant, of course, knew this. Pemberton's application for terms was a confession. Grant was wrong, grossly wrong, in giving terms at Vicksburg.

## AFTER VICKSBURG.

---

After the capture of Vicksburg Grant showed himself to the best advantage. In the north his praise was on every tongue. All other generals, except Meade, were held to have failed, and because Meade did not pursue Lee from Gettysburg he received but moderate applause. It was then doubtful, it is even now doubtful, whether Meade ought to have pursued. On the other hand, by a strange popular caprice, — popular caprice knows no law, — the people refused to censure Grant for paroling his prisoners at Vicksburg. If that was not a case for refusing terms, then there never was a case. He refused terms rightly at Donelson. Banks refused terms rightly at Port Hudson. Grant's act in paroling the Vicksburg army was a flagrant violation of military duty. It is strange, too, that the man who paroled all these men should afterwards have forbidden the release, by exchange, of the Federal prisoners confined at Andersonville. He expressed the opinion that the paroling was "a great advantage to us at this juncture." Often, as in this instance, Grant displays effrontery in his

statements. We see it when he asserts that he started from Cairo (to Belmont) without a purpose, when he denies that at Shiloh he was surprised, and in numerous statements respecting his Virginia campaign. He seems either to be careless whether he is believed, or else to think that public folly will believe any statement, however absurd, merely because he makes it. It is hardly possible that he can have expected to be thought sincere by any one of intelligence when he professed to believe the paroling of the prisoners at Vicksburg "would be a great advantage to us at this juncture."

Grant was the most popular man in the nation. People from the North poured into Vicksburg, some to visit brothers or sons in the army and some to dig up from the levees the mouldering bones of brothers or sons in order to reinter them "in the churchyard there on the green hill-side." All wished to see Gen. Grant and to admire him. Grant dressed with his usual simplicity and behaved with his usual simplicity. He assumed no lordly airs. He was affable to the private soldier and to the private soldier's gray-haired father and mother. Though not gifted in conversation, his manner was so unaffected, simple and kind as to be winning.

The American people, though in some respects the shrewdest, are in some respects the stupidest people on the face of the terraqueous globe. They worship success and they worship it

with a devotion that is blind. In estimating success they lose all discrimination, intellectual and moral. He who is successful in getting wealth receives equal honor whether he gets it by the virtues of industry, economy and far-sighted and wise plans, by mere blundering or by wholesale theft. He who is successful in gaining official rank is honored even if a known charlatan. Though he is conceded to be a blockhead, for "pigmies are pigmies still, though perched on Alps," yet rank, however got, makes him great. Grant's career, except from Port Gibson, had been an unbroken succession of blunders. Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Iuka, Corinth, the abandonment of the M. C. R. R. expedition against Vicksburg, Sherman's expedition to Chickasaw Bayou, the Vicksburg channel, the Yazoo Pass expedition, the Steele's Bayou expedition, the Lake Providence affair, all had been failures and the last, though successful, was in fact the greatest blunder of them all. These failures had filled the Mississippi levees with thousand of dead soldiers. Yet all was at once forgotten. He had succeeded. To have condemned at that time his movement flanking Vicksburg, to have compared it with Blücher's march toward Paris, the stupidest military march known to history, and to have declared Blücher's the wiser of the two, would have been treasonable. Grant had succeeded. To the American mind success sanctifies.

The truth is, the North was eager for a military hero. A number of others had been tried and had been found, in Lincoln's phrase, "augurs that wouldn't bore." At the capture of Vicksburg the people of the North were intoxicated with joy. They were determined to worship. An idol they must have. There was none so fit as Grant, and Grant was made idol. As already stated, he behaved with moderation and good sense. His nature was phlegmatic. His mind was slow. He was incapable alike of enthusiasm and of despondency. This was imputed to him as a proof of genius, that genius which dwells above the clouds in serene and stoical repose. Though not refined in thought, feeling or manner, his behavior on the whole was such as pleases the masses. His prudent silence was also a proof of genius, and here his habit of smoking was of advantage. For a certain order of intellect there is no reply to a troublesome remark so wise as a puff of smoke. His admirers even found proof of genius in his style of writing. Half the commission merchants in the United States are capable of writing in plain and even grammatical English what they will do and what they will not do, what they want and what they don't want. Yet for such writing no commission merchant expects a nation's applause. In Grant's case we are asked to admire such profound observations as follows: (To a corps commander) "The movements of an enemy

necessarily determine counter movements.” (To another corps commander) “Should you discover a change of plans on his (the enemy’s) part, counteract it.” Why any major-general, in writing even to a second lieutenant, should consume a penful of marketable ink, and a half sheet of military paper to write such an instruction, it is not easy to understand. Every grogshop loafer understands that tactics, and practices it in every drunken row. But it is when he prepares a document with elaborate care, when he attempts eloquence, that he becomes interesting. After Fort Donelson he issued to his army a congratulatory order, which began thus: —

[General Orders, No. 2.]

“The general commanding takes pleasure in congratulating the troops of his command for the triumph over rebellion gained by their valor on the 13th, 14th and 15th inst.

“For four successive nights, without shelter during the most inclement weather known in this latitude, they faced the enemy in large force in a position chosen by himself. Though strongly fortified by nature, all the safeguards suggested by science were added. Without a murmur this was borne, prepared at all times to receive an attack, and with continuous skirmishing by day, resulting ultimately in forcing the enemy to surrender without conditions.”

Will some school girl, as an exercise in syntax,



parse the words "this," "prepared" and "resulting" in the last sentence?

After Shiloh he again essayed military eloquence in the following congratulatory order: —

[General Orders, No. 34.]

"The general commanding congratulates the troops who so gallantly maintained their position, repulsed and routed a numerically superior force of the enemy composed of the flower of the Southern army, commanded by their ablest generals and fought by them with the desperation of despair. In numbers engaged no such contest ever took place on this continent. In importance of result, but few such have taken place in the history of the world. Whilst congratulating the brave and gallant soldiers, it becomes the duty of the general commanding to make special notice of the brave wounded and of those killed upon the field. Whilst they leave friends and relations to mourn their loss, they have won a nation's gratitude and undying laurels not to be forgotten by future generations who will enjoy the blessings of the best government the sun ever shone upon, preserved by their valor."

Now, it is certain that a man may be a good general or good commission merchant, and not be a good writer. Nor for either vocation does he need to be a good writer. But when his friends parade him as a writer, he becomes a fair subject for criticism.

As proof of his literary skill it is boastfully asserted that many of his sentences have become popular. Nowadays the press, provided it favors popular prejudice and passion, can do almost anything. In the spring of 1862 the people of the North, with the usual wisdom of the people, were impatient; they were clamoring for McClellan to push on and capture Richmond. While such was the popular mood, Donelson was fought. Buckner asked terms and Grant answered: "I propose to move immediately upon your works." The fort was surrendered and the national joy knew no bounds. The sentence, in the first place, expressed a purpose of immediate advance. This delighted the people. Then it was followed by success and thereupon the people did not doubt that if McClellan would advance, he would as readily take Richmond and end the rebellion. No wonder the sentence became popular. To say the truth it is ordinarily good business English, but even if it were improved by putting the word "immediately" at the end, it would be only such a sentence as is daily uttered by every man, woman and child of average education.

Again, on the question of the best mode of approaching Richmond, the administration had constantly favored what was called the overland line of operations while McClellan had favored the James river line. As the administration, through Pope, Burnside and Hooker had met only disaster by its choice, it became more decidedly in favor of its

choice. To prefer the other line would be to indorse McClellan and condemn the administration. Mr. Secretary Stanton was glad when he had induced Grant to adopt the overland line. At Spottsylvania Court House Grant wrote a dispatch to Washington containing the words: "I purpose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." This purpose suited Stanton exactly. He cut out the sentence and telegraphed it over the country. The anti-McClellan press instantly saw its value. It was made the text for editorials, the zeal of patriotism and the rage of partisanship combined to give it currency, and it became more familiar and more admired than any phrase in the Lord's prayer. Yet the sentence itself, both in thought and expression, is the merest commonplace. It may be added that at Cold Harbor Lee persuaded Grant to abandon "this line" and adopt McClellan's. Grant's utterances arrested attention, not because of intrinsic excellence, but of factitious aid. They exhibited neither weight of thought, nor nobility of sentiment, nor beauty of imagery, nor felicity of diction. But it is not through the frenzy of patriotism and the anger of partisanship, it is not because a nation is in convulsion and statecraft and editorial acuteness ply their arts to stimulate popular rage that the great thoughts of great minds, the thoughts of Shakespeare, of Sterne, of Burke, of Rousseau, find lodgment in the popular heart and live forever.

Of such thoughts no man asserts that they are commonplace.

Though Halleck had no kind word for McClelland's success, without which Grant could not have had success (McClelland had not been at West Point), he praised Grant. His compliment deserves to be repeated. He compared Grant's capture of Vicksburg with Napoleon's capture of Ulm. This comparison, if inserted in a book of humor, would be good. There are in fact many respects in which the two campaigns bear a striking resemblance; as, that in both campaigns the infantry went on foot, in both the cavalry rode horses, in both, as a rule, every soldier had two legs. If such resemblances justify the comparison, Halleck's comparison is just. I have not time to disprove the comparison just as I have not time to disprove that arsenic is good diet, or that water runs up hill. It is sufficient to say that except in those respects in which every modern campaign resembles every other modern campaign, there is scarcely a point of resemblance between the two campaigns. But Halleck held high military position and had written a book, few men were versed in military history, nobody was interested in contradicting the absurd statement and it was concluded, *nemine contradicente*, that Grant was the military peer of Napoleon.

Conspicuously Grant was a man of luck. The

early part of his military career was such as would not admit of being made the subject of interviews. Why should he consent to be interviewed on Belmont, on Fort Henry, on Fort Donelson, on Shiloh, on Iuka, on Corinth? He saw that on all these subjects the less said the better. But when he had finally brought up in the rear of Vicksburg, and the North made him its idol, taciturnity stood him in good stead. People refused to remember that his silence was a policy of prudence and almost of necessity and insisted on thinking it the taciturnity of genius. He was called a sphinx. Having once found that silence brought him credit, he cultivated being non-committal. While at Washington, during Johnson's administration, nobody knew what party he belonged to and it was seriously said that either party could safely nominate him for the Presidency. When asked a political question he answered by inquiring, "Have you seen Marshall Brown's pups?" Thad. Stevens said that when Grant was interrogated on politics "he begins to talk horse." Grant's deficiencies found concealment in silence. But at Vicksburg he made one departure from his rule of silence and it proved to be the best hit of his life. Everybody saw how great a part politics played in the war. Grant saw how McClellan had been treated and how McClernand had been treated. He saw that he had become sufficiently conspicuous to be regarded with political

apprehension. Accordingly he caused himself to be interviewed to the extent of saying that when the rebellion was suppressed, his only ambition for office was to be mayor of Galena so that he could build a sidewalk to his house. When we reflect that he steered clear of both parties during Johnson's term till he saw that the South was bound in military chains and that a Republican victory was assured and then announced himself a Republican and that after two Presidential terms his friends "strove with all their strength" to give him a third term, we are able to appreciate his sincerity. But his declaration served a present purpose admirably.

On the 19th and 20th of September, Rosecrans fought the battle of Chickamauga, and was beaten badly. Bragg drove him back into Chattanooga and there cooped him. The administration determined to reorganize military affairs. Lincoln, thinking it safe to advance a general who wished only to build a sidewalk to his house, created the military division of the Mississippi and Grant was made its commander. October 10th he started to Chattanooga and reached there the 23d. Fearing that before his arrival Rosecrans might commit some additional folly he telegraphed from Louisville an order relieving Rosecrans and placing Gen. George H. Thomas in command of the department of the Cumberland.

## CHATTANOOGA.

---

The town of Chattanooga, lying on a navigable stream, nestled among mountains, the railroad center of that region, was a strategic point of value to either army. It lies on the south side of the Tennessee river, which by a circuitous route flows through a tangled mass of mountains. To the northeast, east and southeast, running north and south, lies Missionary Ridge, four hundred feet high and three miles distant at the nearest point. To the south, at about the same or a greater distance, lies Lookout Mountain, descending by a steep declivity to the river and more than 2,000 feet high.

“Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Between Lookout and Missionary Ridge flows Chattanooga creek, and at the western base of Lookout is Lookout creek, whose valley separates that mountain from Raccoon Mountain. South Chickamauga creek, running in a westerly direction, washes the northern end of Missionary Ridge and empties into the Tennessee. Some five or six

miles to the southwest of Chattanooga the Chattanooga and Nashville Railroad, crossing Raccoon Mountain from the west, enters the valley of Lookout creek at the town of Wauhatchie, about two miles from the Tennessee, ascends that valley to the Tennessee, and passing up hugs the river at the base of Lookout Mountain till it reaches the broken plain in which Chattanooga stands. From this topography it follows that Lookout Mountain commands Lookout Valley, the railroad and the Tennessee. At Chattanooga the river runs due west. But a quarter of a mile or so west it takes a turn southward for about three miles to the base of Lookout, then turns and runs due north about three miles, so as to form a horseshoe called Moccasin Point, because resembling in shape an Indian moccasin. From a ferry at Chattanooga a road crosses Moccasin Point to another ferry called Brown's ferry at a point due west. From Brown's ferry there are two roads leading west to another ferry called Kelly's ferry. The more direct one crosses Raccoon Mountain through a gap. The other runs south from Brown's ferry and parallel with the river to the neighborhood of Wauhatchie and thence westerly to Kelly's ferry. Now, between this second road and the river, as far down as Lookout creek, is a range of high, steep, rugged hills, which command the road and ferry. On the north side of the river, or rather between the river and its parallel



tributary, the Sequatchie, on the west side, there runs north and south a range of hills almost reaching the dignity of mountains, called Walden's Ridge, across which the wagon roads were horrible.

Immediately after Chickamauga Rosecrans gathered his shattered forces into Chattanooga, huddled them close and immediately began to fortify. In the tumult of his mind he did an act of even greater than his usual folly — he abandoned Lookout Mountain. The consequence was that Bragg, occupying it, commanded both the railroad and the river, and Rosecrans was in a state of siege. Supplies could come by railroad and river only as far as Bridgeport, thirty miles west. To reach that town a wagon train, leaving Chattanooga, had to cross the river, go northwest across Walden Ridge and the Sequatchie to Anderson, thence south through Jasper to Bridgeport. To supply a large army for any considerable time by such a route, at a season when roads are bad and are daily growing worse, is impossible. Rosecrans was besieged. Here again is room for a question. How could a boy of nineteen learn in a recitation room to meet such an emergency? Yet why should not two years of actual experience educate a man of strong and mature mind? Is it not clear that there is little in the art of war that can be taught in the recitation room, and that most of that little is the trivial and unessential part?

Rosecrans saw his error when it was too late. But in his distress he had good advisers. Gen. George H. Thomas and Gen. W. F. Smith were there. An examination of the topography enabled these officers, as it enabled perhaps all the officers in that army, to see the obvious thing to be done — for when an army is threatened with starvation everybody begins to reflect and to devise and discuss a mode of relief. Officers and privates were put on half rations. Provender, too, became scarce. Horses and mules became poor and weak, and died by thousands. There was one mode, one obvious mode, of relief. Everybody, of whatever rank, saw and agreed upon that mode. Rosecrans gave the appropriate orders. But Rosecrans was greater in talk than in action. As soon as he was relieved by Grant's dispatch from Louisville and Thomas was put in command, Thomas adopted the same plan and gave additional orders in its furtherance. The orders were in process of being carried out when Grant arrived.

The army was in a bad condition. The nation was anxious. It was precisely the imminence of peril that brought quick relief. In its alarm to save the Army of the Cumberland from destruction the administration had sent on from the Army of the Potomac two corps under Hooker, estimated by Draper, in his History of the Civil War, at 23,000. The desideratum was to establish direct communica-

tion between Chattanooga and Bridgeport. Thomas had ordered Hooker to concentrate the army under his command at Bridgeport, so as to move thence by wagon road through Whiteside to Wauhatchie. Gen. John M. Palmer, who lay opposite Chattanooga, was at the same time ordered to move his command down to a point on the river opposite Whiteside, cross over and occupy the road as Hooker should get control of it. These movements would be in full view of the enemy, and would engage his attention. But another movement, a secret movement, was meanwhile in progress, which Thomas had placed completely in the hands of W. F. Smith. Grant on his arrival continued it in his hands. The range of steep, rugged hills, beginning at the mouth of Lookout creek and running north along the river bank to Brown's ferry, has been mentioned. It was occupied by Confederates. Smith's job was to get control of the ferry and the two roads. Everything worked well. At 3 o'clock in the morning of the 27th, in a dense fog, 1,800 Federal troops in sixty small boats floated in stillness down the river on the side opposite the enemy, landed at Brown's ferry, surprised the enemy's pickets, and seized and occupied the range of hills. Meanwhile 4,000 men were ready at the ferry to throw across a pontoon bridge, and before noon strong positions were fortified, and at their lower extremity near Lookout creek, where the hills were precipitous,

craggy and heavily timbered, were made well nigh impregnable. Smith's enterprise was completely successful.

Hooker overbore all opposition and reached Wauhatchie and the mouth of Lookout creek where he encamped. A little after midnight, Longstreet attempting surprise, attacked Hooker. He failed utterly. The ferry roads were opened and the question of supplies was settled.

Whose was the credit? As to the plan the credit was everybody's. It was so obvious that the whole army, for every man in the army was personally interested, saw it. Rosecrans gave orders in execution of the plan. Thomas, on succeeding Rosecrans pushed it, Hooker and Palmer being on the march when Grant arrived, and leaving entirely to Smith the seizure of the ferry and the capture and fortification of the hills. Grant, on his arrival, approved. Relief would not have come an hour later if Grant had never seen Chattanooga.

It was not now imperative that a battle be fought at Chattanooga. The Federal army was behind the fortifications, Lookout Valley was held by Hooker, and supplies were secure. But Burnside at Knoxville in East Tennessee was threatened. The enemy was massing against him. His peril was imminent. Every hour it was growing more imminent. He was in Grant's military division and could look to none but Grant for aid. Sherman was

ordered to march with his own corps and as much of Hurlbut's as could be spared; but he was to march not to Burnside, where there was urgent need, but to Grant where there was no urgent need. Grant always believed in strong battalions. If Rosecrans, at Chickamauga, could venture to deliver battle, surely with the addition of a corps and more under Sherman and two corps under Hooker, Grant might hope for success. Burnside needed aid and might be destroyed, but Grant saw a chance for the glory of a victory and he determined to fight a victorious battle at Chattanooga. If Burnside's army was destroyed, it would ruin Burnside as a military commander; but if Grant fought and won a battle at Chattanooga, he would get glory. He sends no aid to Burnside. He continues to aid Grant. Days pass. Sherman is nearing Chattanooga. Burnside's peril increases. Halleck telegraphs his painful uneasiness. Lincoln is anxious. Grant is resolved on a Grant victory. After that he will aid Burnside. Foolishest of all things in this contest, Bragg, more incapable than Pemberton, but with a patriotism stronger than his selfishness, thinking himself safe on his mountain slopes and mountain peaks, sends Longstreet's corps, more than 15,000 strong, and Wheeler's cavalry of 5,000—Wheeler's cavalry, which might have done efficient work against Hooker while crossing the Chattanooga Valley to Rossville during the battle of Chatta-

nooga, to re-enforce against Burnside. Grant knows of the departure against Burnside of Longstreet and Wheeler. Still no aid goes to Burnside. Burnside's peril is increased, but the chance for a Grant victory is also increased. Burnside is persistently neglected. It seems as if he will be lost. Grant's army is re-enforced by two additional armies, one under Hooker and one under Sherman. He sends Burnside not one man. On the 23d, 24th and 25th, the battle of Chattanooga was fought, and of course Grant gained a victory, at a cost of between five and six thousand killed and wounded. Fortune smiled upon Burnside. He maintained his position. The second day after the closing of the battle of Chattanooga, Grant sent him re-enforcements, but when they reached him they were not needed.

Bragg's management was surprisingly unwise. While Grant was receiving heavy re-enforcements, Bragg was weakening his force. He might well have doubted that Grant would make a front attack upon him in his mountain stronghold; but he had no right to doubt that Grant would attempt to flank him. But a flank movement is a maneuver and Grant was averse from maneuvering. To weaken his force instead of strengthening it, though Bragg's chief, was not his only error. He had continued to occupy Lookout Mountain. By the success of Hooker and Smith, that position became valueless. But, at any rate, he should either have abandoned it

or else kept troops enough there to defend it. He did neither. On the first day of the battle, Hooker easily scaled the mountain and drove back the handful of men and next morning proceeded by the Ross-ville road to the rear of Bragg's main army. The Confederate troops on Missionary Ridge could see the stars and stripes waving on the mountain top. Here was defeat; here was incipient demoralization. Again, though his position on the heights of Missionary Ridge was well nigh impregnable, yet for some reason that we cannot imagine, he descended into the plain. There, with equal advantage of position, Grant's overwhelming numbers drove him back to the heights. By the mere fact of being driven back, his troops were partially demoralized and began to expect defeat. In enumerating Bragg's mistakes, Grant himself says, "third, in placing so much of a force on the plain in front of his impregnable position."

Again, in the progress of the battle, Bragg, to relieve his extreme right, then hard pressed by Sherman's immense superiority, so weakened his center on the crest of the Ridge as to leave little more than a picket guard. When this feeble line, already disheartened, saw the host of Federal troops advancing upon them in high hope, they deemed the contest hopeless and fled from their positions in rout. The victory was won.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. Grant committed a grievous error in not sending swift aid to Burnside. The fact that Burnside actually escaped, does not affect the character of Grant's conduct.

2. For the relief of the Chattanooga army the credit is hardly to be assigned. In some slight sense it belongs to Thomas, but in no sense to Grant.

3. The battle of Chattanooga should not have been fought at all. It was constantly Grant's purpose to fight. But if Bragg had retained Longstreet and Wheeler and had displayed even moderate skill in placing and handling his troops, it is possible that, owing to his almost impregnable position, he might have repulsed Grant's three armies.

Again, where the enemy occupies a position of great strength, which he can be compelled by flanking to abandon, it is the duty of the advancing general to flank. Sherman drove Johnston back from one strong position to another by successive flankings, which compelled successive retreats. The one exception was Kenesaw Mountain, and Kenesaw Mountain should not have been fought. To sacrifice thousands of lives needlessly is monstrous generalship.

4. Even flanking was not necessary. On the 20th Bragg sent Grant this note: "As there may still



be some non-combatants in Chattanooga, I deem it proper to notify you that prudence would dictate their early withdrawal." The trick was too manifest. As a general is not apt to notify his adversary in advance of his purpose to attack, Grant saw that the note was to be read backward and was designed to keep Grant engaged in preparing for attack while Bragg should withdraw. Two days afterward a deserter from Bragg was brought to Grant. From his statement it seemed certain that Bragg was preparing to withdraw. Grant hastened a battle which he ought to have sought to avoid.

The battle of Lookout Mountain, if it is to be called a battle at all, ought strictly to be regarded as a separate engagement. Grant ordered the attack as, from City Point, Va., he ordered Thomas to attack at Nashville. But with the management of the battle he had no personal concern.

---

Grant was in higher repute than before. Why should he not be? Three questions, — for the people allowed no answers to the questions, — determined his ability as a commander. First, had not Rosecrans' army been relieved from siege and threatened starvation within a few days after Grant's arrival? Second, had he not gained a victory where Rosecrans had suffered defeat? Third,

had not Burnside remained safe? Who, then, could doubt Grant's greatness?

Soon after the battle of Chattanooga Grant removed his headquarters to Nashville. While there he wrote Halleck his opinion of the best plan of campaign for the army of the Potomac. The reader would not pardon me if I failed to set forth the letter *in extenso*. It well deserves immortality as a curiosity in military literature. The letter, if read in connection with an account of Grant's subsequent North Anna exploit in Virginia, will afford to the military mind more sport than Mark Twain's best: —

“ NASHVILLE, TENN., Jan. 19, 1864.

“ *Maj.-Gen. H. W. Halleck, Washington, D. C.:*

“ I would respectfully suggest whether an abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable and in lieu of these, one to be taken further south. I would suggest Raleigh, N. C., as the objective point, and Suffolk as the starting point. Raleigh once secured, I would make Newbern the base of supplies until Wilmington is secured. A moving force of sixty thousand men would probably be required to start on such an expedition. This force would not have to be increased unless Lee should withdraw from his present position. In that case the necessity for so large a force on the Potomac would not exist. A force moving

from Suffolk would destroy, first, all the roads about Weldon or even as far north as Hicksford. From Weldon they would scarcely meet with serious opposition. Once there, the most interior line of railway still left to the enemy — in fact, the only one they would then have — would be so threatened as to force him to use a large portion of his army in guarding it. This would virtually force an evacuation of Virginia and indirectly of East Tennessee. It would throw our armies into new fields where they could partially live upon the country, and reduce the stores of the enemy. It would cause thousands of North Carolina troops to desert and return to their homes. It would give us possession of many negroes who are now indirectly aiding the rebellion. It would draw the enemy from campaigns of their own choosing, and for which they are prepared, to new lines of operations never expected to become necessary. It would effectually blockade Wilmington, the post now of more value to the enemy than all the balance of their sea coast. It would enable operations so commence at once by removing the war to a more southern climate, instead of months of inactivity in winter quarters. Other advantages might be cited which will be likely to grow out of this plan, but these are enough. From your better opportunity of studying the country and the armies that would be involved

in this plan, you will be better able to judge of the practicability of it than I possibly can.

“ I have written this in accordance with what I understood to be an invitation from you to express my views about military operations and not to insist that any plan of mine should be carried out. Whatever course is agreed upon I shall always believe is at least intended for the best, and until fully tested will hope to have it prove so.

“ U. S. GRANT, Maj. Gen.”

The capture of Richmond was desirable chiefly because of the moral effect that would spring from the fall of the Confederate capital. But the moral effect of the capture of Raleigh would have been nothing, and its strategic value was hardly greater than that of a country store at a cross-roads. Hence “ the abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond,” and the substitution of Raleigh as objective point has at least the merit of originality. Though Grant gives reasons as plenty as blackberries, yet a further argument in favor of his proposed substitution is that he could have occupied the new objective point without opposition. Lee would have had no manner of objection to Grant’s spending time and means in roving through North Carolina and lying idle in Raleigh as long as he pleased. Meanwhile, the Federal army being out of the way, Lee might have made a pleasant foraging excursion into Pennsylvania and circumjacent regions. After all,

this strategy was superior to the strategy of his march past Vicksburg and to Blücher's march past Napoleon. This strategy was safe; while the strategy of the two marches of Grant and Blücher exposed armies to destruction.

The office of lieutenant-general was created, giving its incumbent command of all the armies of the United States. Grant was appointed March 1, 1864.

## AT THE HEAD.

---

In 1808, while waging his war against Spain, Napoleon's affairs went badly. An army had been lost at Baylen. He saw toward the close of the year that he must increase his force against that country. But his ambitious eye saw also that there was a splendid opportunity to increase his own fame as a military commander. He accordingly ordered down into Spain eight additional corps d'armee and himself early in November established headquarters at Bayonne in southeastern France. Soon afterward, when all was ready and northern Spain was deluged with his legions, he took the field. He marched triumphantly to Madrid. Fools applauded. Napoleon was declared to be invincible. Europe wondered as it compared the brilliant success of French armies when led by the genius of Napoleon with the previous disasters. It is only in late years that the world has come to understand that with the French forces in Spain prior to November, too feeble for the unexpected uprising and spirit that opposed them, Napoleon himself would have met defeat; while at the head of the immense host

which he poured upon that hapless country, any one of five hundred officers in his command could have marched to victory.

In the battle of Chattanooga, in which to the army under Rosecrans he added the army under Sherman and the army under Hooker and with these three armies he fought under the army Bragg reduced heavily, Grant had an advantage like that of Napoleon in Spain. In the campaign of the Potomac he had that same advantage. He had, too, every other advantage that a military commander could have.

No reason was lacking for his success in Virginia. The south was getting exhausted. But especially it was getting tired. The first burst of southern patriotism had spent its force. The South had ceased to be gushing. War had lost its attractiveness. It had acquired repulsiveness. Mourning was in every house. Industries languished. Prosperity there was none. Luxury was a thing only remembered. In many a family once affluent the struggle was to keep the wolf from the door. Wherever the Federal arms had gone, rapine and the torch had gone. When the Southern man, alive like other men to his personal interests, lost a mule, a negro, or a smokehouse of bacon, he repined, and in Shylock's language said: "The curse ne'er fell upon our nation until now. I never felt it until now." When he found his cribs and granaries emptied or burned, his cattle driven away, and his

house rifled or burned, he regretted war. Besides, the Southern people were a people of politicians and their public men had been their pride and glory. But their Congress had become filled with pigmies and in a sense contemptible and ceased to challenge admiration or even respect. Even Davis was charged with favoritism, with obstinacy, with unwisdom. The war spirit of the South burned low.

The North too had changed. The change was partly for the worse, but partly also for the better. The people had been educated for war. That was a big fact. There was no longer, as in McClellan's day, the insane cry of "On to Richmond." In McClellan's time the people did not allow the general to command. In Grant's time they did. In McClellan's time the administration, obedient to popular clamor, perpetually restrained and interfered. In Grant's time it was otherwise.

In McClellan's time, if Stanton, in his exalted wisdom and unpatriotic partisan selfishness, decided that McDowell's army, at a critical hour should be withheld from McClellan, it was withheld. In Grant's time the general could order forward as reinforcements "all the infantry you can rake and scrape" "from the defenses of Washington and from Wallace's military department." In McClellan's time if the administration wished, against McClellan's desire, to divide the army into corps and select corps commanders from its own favorites and



without consulting McClellan, the administration did it, making selections so unfit that Hooker, not friendly to McClellan, said that it would have been impossible for McClellan to succeed with such corps commanders. In Grant's time, the commander ruled not only that army but all the armies with an absolute rule. In McClellan's time the subordinate commanders were without experience, without the confidence of their troops, and to a large extent, without desert of confidence. In Grant's time there were Hancock and Warren and Meade and W. F. Smith and hundreds of officers of inferior rank who on the field had won the admiration of their troops by demonstrated skill and intrepidity. Not only by the law creating the office of lieutenant-general but by popular approval, Grant's power was despotic. He was invested with Napoleonic authority to remove in his caprice an officer of whatever grade and to promote on the battlefield. Probably no military commander, unless uniting, like Frederick the Great, or Napoleon, military and civil supremacy, ever had military authority so absolute.

When Grant assumed personal command of the Army of the Potomac on the north bank of the Rapidan, it embraced, including Burnside's corps, about one hundred and forty thousand men of all arms. He was confronted by Lee on the south bank with a force present for duty, according to the

rolls, of fifty-two thousand six hundred and twenty-six men of all arms. Grant's army had been created by McClellan. It is no part of my duty to vindicated McClellan's military character. But it will not be denied that in capacity to organize, discipline and appoint an army, his skill was good. Grant's army had campaigned and fought. Hooker, with his usual flatulency, had declared it to be "the finest army on the planet." It was commanded, as army commander, by Maj.-Gen. George G. Meade, undoubtedly skillful and accomplished, but nervous and irascible. It was divided into four corps. The 2d corps was commanded by Maj.-Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, born to command on the field of battle, of rare military ability and hence, like McClelland, selected for a duty of special peril or requiring capacity for independent command. The 5th corps was commanded by Maj.-Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren, an engineer of superior skill, and as a military commander only inferior to Hancock. It was Warren, who in the last previous campaign, commanded at the battle of Bristoe Station and with adroitness and intrepidity gained a brilliant victory. The 6th corps was commanded by Maj.-Gen. John Sedgwick, intelligent, faithful and capable. The 9th corps was under Maj.-Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside of whom it is kind to say nothing. Such was the army, perfect in organization, perfect in discipline, perfect in ap-

pointment, perfect in fervor of patriotism and in eagerness for action and for victory, that was now placed in Grant's hands. His former successes, whether due to accident, to the incompetency of adversaries, or to overwhelming numbers, or to all three together, had won him the confidence of the country and of the army. No general in the world's history ever had a better opportunity for great achievement. What were his achievements?

In the matter of approaching the Confederate capital two lines of operation had been considered from the very beginning of the war. One was the James river line. It had been preferred and attempted by McClellan. The causes which led to its failure it is not my province to discuss. But the administration, and especially Secretary Stanton, strongly condemned McClellan, and hence condemned all that he had done. It is certain that of the two lines the James river gave by odds the cheaper and readier access to Richmond. The overland line was obnoxious to three objections: First, it was much the longer; secondly, from the character of the country over which it passed, partly rugged and partly swampy, it abounded in strong positions for defense; thirdly, it was intersected by many streams. Indeed it is now safe to say that the James river line was so manifestly and immeasurably superior that no military man would now hesitate in adopting it. But as Stanton, in his

hatred of McClellan, had driven the army to horrible slaughter and defeat under Pope, Burnside and Hooker, to have the James river line adopted, and its adoption followed by success, would involve not only a vindication of McClellan but, still worse, a condemnation of the administration. Stanton, though of good intellect, was a man of imperious temper and of such moral nature that he scrupled at nothing. He resolved upon the overland line at all hazards. There was one man who warmly concurred in Stanton's preference. His name was Robert E. Lee. If Lee could not order, he could entice. He enticed as successfully if not as ostentatiously as Stanton ordered. Pope, Burnside, Hooker and Meade, none of them with reputation sufficient to withstand Stanton, had attempted the overland route and failed. But Grant is invested with the legal authority of lieutenant-general and with moral authority that is boundless. Which line will he choose?

With such vast numerical superiority over Lee, nearly three to one, Grant felt able for anything. The language he employed in dispatches to Butler to Meade and Sherman, show boundless confidence. In his Nashville letter he had impliedly condemned the overland line as also the other. But Stanton preferred the overland line and Grant preferred to please Stanton—for Grant was never careful of human life. To sacrifice eighty thousand men was not much ;

to please Stanton was much. Yet in fact he adopted both routes. This was one of his greatest blunders. In adopting the overland route his strategy would have been bad. In adopting both routes it was wretchedly bad. One consistent plan is better than two inconsistent ones. This is what he did. By written instructions he ordered Maj.-Gen. B. F. Butler, in command of about forty thousand men, to follow the James river. He was first to occupy a peninsula formed by a sinuosity of the James river on the south side and there fortify. In a certain contingency he was to move to a point on the south of that river opposite to Richmond, Grant, at the head of the Meade army, investing Richmond at the same time on the north side. The contingency never arose. Butler moved to Bermuda Hundred as ordered, but was soon, as Grant said, "bottled up as with a cork," and effected nothing. His campaign was an utter failure. It was a failure not merely because of Butler's military incapacity, but because the plan was essentially bad. The failure was Grant's more than Butler's. Forty thousand men were as little available there as four thousand would have been. Thus, by blundering strategy, forty thousand were rendered valueless. Butler's command is to be considered as the left wing of Grant's army in the advance upon Richmond. What service did it render? None. Then, in opening the Virginia campaign, Grant's strategy was bad in adopting

the overland line, and it was bad in adopting both lines, by placing his left wing so remote from the main army as to be useless. Never did military leader commit two greater strategic blunders in one campaign. They cost eighty thousand men.

In his written instructions to Butler Grant says, "Richmond to be your objective point." In his written instructions to Meade too, he indicated his purpose to advance to Richmond. Yet he made a distinction. While he said to Butler, "Richmond to be your objective," to Meade, he said, "*Lee's army* will be your objective point." "Wherever he goes, there you will go." To Butler April, 18th, he said, "I shall aim to fight Lee between here and Richmond *if he will stand.*" To Sherman, April 4th, he declares his purpose to operate against "*Lee's army* wherever it may be found." It is certain that Grant's confidence was exuberant. "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." "O, but she'll keep her word." The reader now wonders whether he was ever able to find his "objective point," Lee's army, and whether he was ever able to induce Lee to "stand." Can it be that Lee's army ceased to be Grant's "objective" and that Grant became Lee's objective? Can it be that instead of the question being whether Lee would "stand," Lee made race upon race against Grant, that Grant made nocturnal escapes, but that Lee always did meet him?

Grant established his headquarters with Meade's

army March 26, 1864, and May 3d, he issued an order for the army to march at midnight and cross the Rapidan to the east of Lee's line in two columns, by Ely's ford and Germanna ford. On the night of the 4th more than one hundred thousand Federal troops were encamped south of the Rapidan in the Wilderness. Orders were then issued to march the next morning in a westerly or rather southwesterly direction, just in the rear of Lee to Gordonsville. Hancock was to march on the 5th to Shady Grove Church, a point about due west from Spottsylvania court, and distant some fifteen miles. His advance got within three miles of the church when it was halted.

When, on the evening of the 4th, Grant found the body of his army safely encamped in the wilderness he was elated. To cross a river in presence of an enemy is sometimes impossible. He had apprehended that Lee would resist his crossing and he concluded that he had surprised Lee. Seated on the opposite bank of the river, daily expecting a movement and watching eagerly, and having so vigilant and enterprising a cavalry commander as Gen. Jeb. Stuart, it would have been strange if Lee had been surprised. Yet speaking of the fact that he had crossed successfully, Grant says, "This I regarded as a great success, and it removed from my mind the most serious apprehension I had entertained, that of crossing the river in the face of an

active, large, well-appointed and ably commanded army." Why did not Lee, vigilant, wary and prompt, attempt to prevent the crossing? Surely not for lack of confidence, for his confidence was such that after the crossing he attacked Grant on even terms. Lee's motive in allowing Grant to cross it is not difficult to conjecture. Grant, in his Nashville letter, had impliedly condemned the overland line, as also the James river line. Lee knew that if a capable general he must condemn the former. Yet he was willing "to build a bridge of gold," to have him adopt it. He probably reasoned that Grant had in appearance yielded to Stanton's urgency, but that if resisted successfully in crossing, his purpose might be to assert the fact as a sufficient justification for adopting the route favored by McClellan. This last is exactly what Lee desired by all means to prevent. If, however, Lee should allow him to cross, Grant would then, for very shame, be unwilling, even after defeat, to turn back. To do so would be to demoralize his army and to ruin himself. In short, if Grant once crossed, Lee would be indifferent whether he turned back overwhelmed by defeat and humiliation, or through successive disasters and mortifications, pushed on by that route toward Richmond. Lee was hence as eager as Grant to have the Federal army crossed successfully and interference would have been bad generalship.

Ewell commanded Lee's right or eastern wing



(his army facing northward) and Hill his left, Longstreet lying a few miles to the southwest of Hill. Lee's headquarters were at Orange Court-house, about equi-distant between Ewell's right and Hill's left. From Orange Court-house there run two roads to Fredericksburg, one a turnpike two or three miles south of the Rapidan at the point where Grant crossed, and the other a plank road, chiefly parallel with the pike and two or three miles south. Another road, the Catharpin road, runs south of the plank road and in a southwesterly direction. Old Wilderness Tavern, near which Grant had his headquarters during the battle, was about three miles a little west of south from Ely's ford on the pike. On the night of the 4th Ewell's command bivouacked about three miles from the tavern. By the middle of the forenoon of the 5th, Warren, marching by the plank road, had reached Parker's store, nearly three miles from the tavern as the crow flies, but by road perhaps six, when he was struck by Ewell. At first Grant thought it a mere skirmishing force of the enemy. He soon, however, found his mistake, and forwarded to Hancock, who marched on the Catharpin road, an order to halt. Two hours afterward Hancock was directed to return and push for Parker's store. Burnside, who had not crossed on the 4th was ordered forward. Warren was assailed fiercely, but resisted stubbornly. That afternoon the battle was

hot. A part of Sedgwick's corps and a part of Hancock's corps were engaged, The conflict was ended by darkness. Three thousand of Warren's men were stretched on the field.

That night Grant gave orders for a general engagement, to begin at five o'clock next morning. He has found his "objective." He has found that Lee will "stand." Sedgwick was placed on the extreme right, north of the pike. Warren adjoined Sedgwick's left, his right occupying and reaching a little north of the pike. Burnside was ordered to take position on Warren's left, his own left to reach down nearly to the plank road. Hancock was to join Burnside and hold the extreme left of the line of battle, crossing the plank road and reaching nearly two miles below. Grant knew that Longstreet had been cantoned near Gordonsville and hence anticipated from that enterprising and daring leader a blow upon his left flank which was perhaps four miles distant from his own headquarters. He therefore took the precaution to place his most skillful corps commander on that flank. Again, it seemed not unlikely that the two roads would be most heavily assailed. Hence, he placed Hancock on the plank road and Warren on the pike. Grant had notified Hancock that Burnside would connect with his right and Hancock made his dispositions accordingly. All were ordered to open battle at 5 in the morning. But Lee was quicker and opened fire before

5. Hancock's troops advanced handsomely and during some hours drove the enemy before them for more than a mile. After about two hours of terrific fighting, hearing no sound of battle from beyond his right, he sent word of the fact to Meade and asked that Burnside be directed to attack as his right was getting fatigued and shattered. But repeated orders to that officer from headquarters failed to bring him forward. He behaved under Grant exactly as he had behaved under McClellan at Antietam. About 11 o'clock firing in Hancock's front slackened, but at that hour Burnside's corps had not been engaged. Grant sent an aid-de-camp to conduct Burnside to the field. (One whole division of Burnside's corps had been ordered to the rear to guard trains and was not again heard of in battle for weeks.) About 2 p. m. Brig.-Gen. Robert B. Potter, of Burnside's corps, attacked the enemy with some advantage. About 5:30 p. m. Brig.-Gen. Orlando B. Willcox, of Burnside's corps, attacked and was at first successful, but was soon repulsed in disorder.

Lee's plan had been to mass his forces on Grant's left (Hancock), and drive him back to the Rapidan. To that end Longstreet was directed to strike Hancock's flank. On account of Burnside's failure to appear until afternoon instead of 5 a. m., Hancock's command, though successful in driving Lee back, had a terribly severe time of it. About noon Long-

street struck his left flank and rear and with effect. Hancock was driven back until he had lost all the ground he had previously gained. To make things worse, during the afternoon a fire broke out in the woods in his front which caught in and burned a part of his improvised log breastworks and gave the enemy some advantage. A multitude of the wounded, who lay in the woods perished, either suffocated by smoke or consumed by flames. Longstreet massed heavily against Hancock's flank. His onset was made in great force and with impetuosity and for a time he brushed away opposition. Hancock's left fell back in utter disorder. Longstreet had also taken the precaution to send a body of troops by a detour to occupy the Brock road, a road running north and south and some distance in Hancock's rear. No troops will stand with an enemy in front and rear. If this maneuver had been carried on a little longer, it is impossible to conjecture what disaster would have befallen Grant's army. By a maneuver exactly similar, Stonewall Jackson struck Hooker's right flank at Chancellorsville, not three miles distant, and inflicted a terrible defeat. Longstreet's success had been complete and he was sanguine. But, luckily for Grant, while riding with his staff at his front, Longstreet came also in front of a part of his flanking force. The view through the thick woods was so indistinct that, exactly as in Stonewall Jackson's case, the flanking

force mistook Longstreet's party for Federals and fired upon them. Longstreet was severely wounded. This accident checked the movement. Lee took personal command, but it was nearly an hour before he could get the movement fully in hand so as to renew the assault with safety. Meanwhile Hancock had rallied his troops and the opportunity was gone. But for Longstreet's disabling wound the disorder in Hancock's line might have spread and Grant shared the fate of Hooker. Lee had employed mind and maneuvered. Grant always showed a strange aversion from maneuvering. Swinton relates that one day before crossing the Rapidan, Meade, in conversation with Grant, said something about maneuvering and Grant instantly interrupted with the remark, "I never maneuver," — an assertion he could easily have proved.

Lee's plan, as above stated, was, by massing on Grant's left and pushing Longstreet upon his flank (Lee was fertile in maneuvers), to drive Grant back upon the Rapidan. Hence he had no need for aggressive action by his own left. He accordingly, on the 5th, had ordered his left to intrench, using artillery in the few places where artillery could be used and selecting his defensive line with that view. At 5 a. m. Sedgwick and Warren opened fire, but were repulsed. There was little more fighting done by either of these corps until evening, when Lee made another maneuver. He ordered Early to

attack Sedgwick's right flank. The attack was successful. Sedgwick's right was driven back or rather was rolled up, thrown into disorder and a large number of prisoners taken, including two brigadiers. Darkness put an end to the attack. Thus ended the fighting of the 6th, for the slight cavalry conflicts were merely incidental. Grant's loss during the two days in killed, wounded and missing was about 15,000.

The morning of the 7th the armies stood facing each other. Neither attacked. But the "objective" is at hand. Lee "stands." The coolness with which Grant in his report, notes the fact, is amusing. "From this it was evident to my mind that the two days' fighting had satisfied him (Lee) of his inability to further maintain the contest in the open field, notwithstanding his advantage of position." It is to be regretted that Gen. Grant did not proceed to show in what respect Lee had an advantage of position or how, on that peculiar battle ground, either general could possibly have an advantage of position. Again, to a plain man, it would seem that instead of being "satisfied of his inability to further maintain the contest in the open field," his attitude, grim and defiant, showed the opposite. And such, as soon as darkness came on, was Grant's practical interpretation.

Whose was the victory? Technically, it was Lee's. The first decisive fact is that immediately after the

battle, Grant withdrew from the battlefield, turned his back upon the enemy and left Lee in possession. The second fact is that instead of resuming his march to the west by the pike and plank road and the Catharpine road he abandoned that route and the plan of reaching Gordonsville, leaving Lee in armed occupancy of those roads, and under cover of night took a route east of south. The total change in his plan of campaign must have been humiliating. Grant must have been in the mood of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, "Plague on't, an I thought he had been valiant and so cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd have challenged him. Let him let the matter slip and I'll give him my horse, gray Capulet."

In the narrative in his Personal Memoirs of the battle of the Wilderness, Grant turns aside to make a personal assault upon Mr. William Swinton, author the History of the Army of the Potomac. That book gives an account of that army. Mr. Swinton's work discovers a wide and accurate acquaintance with the military art, an exact knowledge of the strategic and tactical movements of that army with the military significance and propriety of each movement, an intimate familiarity with military literature and superior acumen as a military critic, together with a clear, concise and, for the most part, scholarly style. Like Jomini, he was a student of the art of war and like Jomini he knew that actual observation on the march and in the field

must be coupled with study of the books. Like Jomini, too, by his constant presence with the army and his constant study of the books, he became more capable in the military art than the generals of his day. His book is a masterly piece of military history, probably second only to Napier's Peninsular War. With whatever campaign he deals he moves straightforward, exhaustive in essential facts, veracious in narrative and intelligent and just in criticism. It is thus that he deals with Grant's campaign in Virginia. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* Grant's anger and personal assaults are explained. He steps aside from his military story to berate Swinton personally. He even states that at one time Burnside ordered Swinton to be shot, — for Burnside, as a military commander, merits this praise that with a chivalric generosity toward a hostile army on the battlefield he united, when armed with military power, a heroic severity toward an individual foe. In this matter Grant made a mistake. He should have remembered that the public care not a straw for the personal character and conduct of Mr. Swinton, and if he had added that Swinton was a horse thief, a pirate and an ex-convict the public, to save the trouble of a dispute, would "for the sake of the argument," admit it. But the public may be pardoned for thinking that Gen. Grant, sparing personal abuse or not according to his taste, might profitably have taken pains to show that Swinton's statements



of fact are untrue, his criticisms unsound or his citations of military authorities inapposite. But since in personal controversy every man does the best he can, it must be concluded that Grant answered Swinton with personal abuse because he could make no better answer.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. In this battle Lee was the attacking party. Hence it is nothing to the purpose to say in vindication of Grant that the battlefield, covered with a dense growth of stunted pines and shubbery, was favorable for defense. The fact is against Grant. The two chief features of the engagement were Longstreet's attack on Grant's left and Early's attack on his right, both offensive. With nearly three to one Grant in defensive action was beaten.

2. Nor is it true to say that the Confederates knew the battle ground and the Federals did not. That same Federal army under Hooker had crossed the Rapidan by the same fords to be beaten at Chancellorsville. It had again gone through the Wilderness under Meade in the movement against Mine Run, where his army passed into this identical region. The truth is in a country so monotonous in its configuration and aspects and in which, as a rule, a man cannot see, in the season of foliage, five rods

in any direction, there is no such thing as knowing the country.

3. In the management of the battle Grant displayed simply no mind.

4. With his overwhelming superiority it was in his power to maneuver to destroy Lee. He should have placed sixty thousand men (to be entirely safe) behind improvised breastworks in front of Lee. Then with eighty thousand he could have wheeled upon Lee's right flank and rear and driven him into the Rapidan. There have been a few cases, but only a few, in the world's history in which with such superiority there has been an outcome so discreditable.

5. If, in this fight, Grant had only 52,626 men, ——?

## SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE.

---

Grant's purpose on crossing the Rapidan was to proceed to Gordonsville, and cut Lee's communication with Richmond. Hence he ordered the march of his army in direction nearly west, and Hancock's first halt was to be at Shady Grove Church, about due west of Spottsylvania Court House. He not only changed his plan in regard to Lee's army as his objective (for Lee, cut off from his supplies, would have been compelled to fight), but he also changed his plan to cut off Lee from his communications, as he would have done by taking position at Gordonsville. Instead of marching nearly west he marched a little east of south. As stealthily as possible, keeping Hancock in position till the last, he began at dark on the 7th a movement to Spottsylvania Court House, distant from his then left flank about fifteen miles. Aided by accident Lee was at that point before Grant. The objective that Grant had professed to be seeking sought Grant. In his "Personal Memoirs" (by whomsoever they were written, Grant adopted them), Grant says that Lee's position at the Wilderness was nearer than his to

Spottsylvania, that being the reason why Lee was able to intercept him. In this he was mistaken. Grant's left was two or three miles nearer than Lee's right by any route they could have taken. Though Grant's march to Spottsylvania met opposition, he thought, as when Warren was struck in the Wilderness, that it was a mere skirmish, and accordingly prepared an order for an immediate march of the army to the North Anna river, a part to march by roads a mile or so west of Spottsylvania, a part by roads a mile or so east, and Burnside, always allowed to keep out of danger, still further east. Lee made movements which induced Grant not to hasten. During the afternoon of the 9th Lee fixed his lines, intrenched and placed artillery. There was no fighting on that day except that the sharpshooters kept busy. It was in the morning of the 9th, while standing near where entrenchments were being constructed, that Gen. Sedgwick was struck by a sharpshooter's bullet and killed instantly. He was succeeded in command of the 6th corps by Brig.-Gen. Horatio G. Wright. Gen. Andrew A. Humphreys, at that time chief of staff of the Army of the Potomac, and subsequently commander of the 2d army corps, says of the position of Spottsylvania Court House, that "it had no special military strength," that "roads radiated from it in all directions, including a good wagon road to Richmond," that "sufficiently good roads south-

ward lay open to us on *either* side of us by which if we did not attack in front we could have moved to turn either flank." All the ground inclosed in Lee's lines and surrounding them was farms ordinarily level, part wooded and part cultivated fields. Lee entrenched on the north, the east and the west of the Court House, his remotest points on the east and west lines being, perhaps, two miles apart.

On the evening of the 9th Grant issued orders for an attack on the morning of the 10th. The 2d corps, Hancock, the 5th, Wright, and the 6th, Warren, were on the 10th hotly engaged. At that time Col. Emory Upton commanded the 2d brigade of the 1st division of Wright's corps. A little after 6 p. m., with his own brigade, the 3d brigade, and the brigade of Gen. Thomas H. Neill, he stormed a part of the enemy's works. He succeeded in gaining it and held it till dark, when he withdrew, having lost 1,000 men in killed, wounded and missing. On the morning of the 10th Burnside was ordered up. He reached a position near the enemy's works and intrenched, but did no fighting. The total Federal loss in killed, wounded and missing on the 10th was probably 5,000. On the evening of the 9th Hancock had been ordered to move against Lee's left. On the 10th, while this movement was in progress, the plan was changed, and it was determined to attack heavily on Lee's north line and Hancock was ordered to withdraw. Before the

withdrawal was completed Lee pushed out and attacked. Hancock repulsed him, inflicting much loss. Meanwhile the woods in Hancock's rear, that is, immediately to the west, took fire and many wounded perished in the flames. At no point had there been success. There was no fighting on the 11th. At 9:30 of the 10th Grant dispatched to Halleck as follows: "Send to Belle Plain (a new base of supplies) all the infantry you can rake and scrape. With the present position of the armies 10,000 men can be spared from the defenses of Washington, besides all the troops that have reached there since Burnside's departure. Some may also be brought from Wallace's department."

At 3 p. m. of the 11th Grant sent Meade a dispatch as follows: —

"Move three divisions of the 2d corps by the rear of the 5th and 6th corps, under cover of night, so as to join the 9th (Burnside's) corps in a vigorous assault on the enemy at 4 a. m. to-morrow. I will send one or two staff officers over to-night to stay with Burnside and impress him with the importance of a prompt and vigorous attack. Warren and Wright should hold their corps as close to the enemy as possible, to take advantage of any diversion caused by this attack and to break in if opportunity presents itself. There is but little doubt in my mind that the assault last evening would have proved entirely successful if it had commenced an hour

earlier and had been heartily entered into by Mott's division and by the 9th (Burnside's) corps." To send "one or two staff officers over to-night to stay with" a corps commander is certainly a special compliment. The phrase, "impress him with the importance of a prompt and vigorous attack," is an ingenious military euphemism.

At no point on Lee's line had the Federal army gained success on the 10th. Not one inch of Lee's line was held by Grant an hour after darkness of that day of blood. Yet, on the 11th, at 8:30 a. m., Grant dispatched to Halleck. "\* \* \* The result up to this time is much in our favor." Such is military veracity! Observe, too, that here is no room for opinion. When, the day after a battle, a general extravagantly estimates the number of the enemy's killed and wounded, or when, as in Grant's dispatch on the first day of Shiloh, he placed Johnston's force at 100,000, there is room for honest error in opinion. But in the case before us there was no room for opinion. Grant knew the facts exactly. He knew that he had sacrificed about 5,000 men, and had not gained one inch. Yet he deliberately asserts on paper, "The result up to this time is much in our favor." Such is military veracity.

Further on in the dispatch he says: "I am now sending back to Belle Plain for a fresh supply of provisions and ammunition, and purpose to fight it

out on this line if it takes all summer. The arrival of re-enforcements will be very encouraging to the men, and I hope they will be sent as fast as possible and in as great numbers." Crossing the Rapidan with 140,000 against Lee's 52,000, Grant has marched fifteen miles and, two days in succession, calls frantically for re-enforcements. The demand, too, is not limited. "All you can rake and scrape." "I hope they will be sent as fast as possible and *in as great numbers.*" He who can get for the asking, can afford to be lavish. "Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men. Will fill a pit as well as better."

But the dispatch brought joy to Stanton's heart, for he interpreted one of its clauses as a condemnation of McClellan, and Stanton would willingly afford 20,000 men a week for that noble object. He accordingly cut out the sentence "I \* \* \* purpose to fight it out on this line (the overland line) if it takes all summer." It was flashed over the United States, the administration papers took it up and it soon became a patriotic duty, a test of loyalty, to regard it as unequalled in rhetorical excellence. Grant himself seems to have embraced that idea, for he takes pains to incorporate the dispatch in his Personal Memoirs.

There was no fighting on the 11th. Why? If Grant did not know that he was writing an untruth when he dispatched "the results are *much* in our



favor," why not push much into more? On the 10th the attack had been made chiefly on Lee's left. Having failed, Grant on the 11th determined to attack his right, or rather his northern line. Hancock was selected. To conceal the movement the corps was not moved till after dark. The night was rainy and the ground muddy. The march was difficult. But Hancock executed his order and disposed his lines. On the 12th, at 4:35 a. m., day just dawning, Hancock assaulted. He succeeded. The enemy in his front gave way. Hancock pursued. A half mile to the rear, there was another line of intrenchments. The enemy rallied. Then began a conflict that was horrible. In front of Hancock's right Lee's line of breastworks formed a salient angle in shape of a V, its apex pointing northward. This salient angle came to be called the "bloody angle." It was vitally important to Grant to capture, and to Lee to retain, this angle. Wright's corps on Hancock's right was pushed up to its west side. At 8 a. m. Warren on Wright's right and Burnside on Hancock's left were ordered forward to make the greatest possible diversion in favor of Hancock and Wright. It was soon found that Warren was opposed by Longstreet's full corp and could effect nothing and he was accordingly ordered to support Wright. Burnside had no substantial success. The fighting from Hancock's left to Wright's right continued incessantly.

At the bloody angle it was murderous. Never did war with all its horrors furnish a more awful exhibition of carnage. It was not battle; it was massacre. Swinton, the historian, says: "The enemy's (Lee's), most savage sallies were directed to retake the famous salient which was now become an angle of death, and presented a spectacle ghastly and terrible. On the Confederate side of the works lay many corpses of those who had been bayoneted by Hancock's men when they first leaped the intrenchments. To these were constantly added the bravest of those who, in the assaults to recapture the position, fell at the margin of the works till the ground was literally covered with piles of dead and the woods in front of the salient were one hideous Golgotha." In a foot-note the same author says: "I am aware that the language above used may resemble exaggeration; but I speak of that which I personally saw. In the vicious phraseology commonly employed by those who undertake to describe military operations, and especially by those who never witnessed a battlefield, 'piles of dead,' figure much more frequently than they exist in the reality. The phrase is here no figure of speech, as can be attested by thousands who witnessed the ghastly scene. It may be stated that the musketry fire has had the effect to kill the whole forest within its range, and there is at Washington the trunk of a tree eighteen inches in diameter which was actually cut in two by

the bullets." Brig.-Gen. Lewis A. Grant, of the 6th corps, who participated in this conflict, says: "It was not only a desperate struggle, but it was literally a hand-to-hand fight. Nothing but the piled up logs or breastworks separated the combatants. Our men would reach over the logs and fire into the face of the enemy, would stab over with their bayonets; many were shot and stabbed through the crevices and holes between the logs; men mounted the works and with muskets rapidly handed them, kept up a continuous fire till they were shot down, when others would take their place and continue the deadly work. \* \* \* Several times during the day the rebels would show a white flag above the works, and when our fire slackened, jump over and surrender, and others were crowded down to fill their places. \* \* \* It was there that the somewhat celebrated tree was cut off by bullets, there that the brush and logs were cut to pieces and whipped into basket-stuff. \* \* \* There that the rebel ditches and cross sections were filled with dead men several deep. \* \* \* I was at the angle next day. The sight was terrible and sickening, much worse than at Bloody Lane (Antietam). There a great many dead men were lying in the road, and across the rails of the torn-down fences, and out in the cornfield; but they were not piled up several deep, and their flesh was not so torn and mangled as at the angle." Gen. Humphreys, chief of staff of the

Army of the Potomac, says: "At the west angle the fighting was literally murderous. \* \* \* As an indication of the sanguinary character of the conflict of the 10th and 12th, Col. Upton remarks that Capt. Lamont, of the 5th Maine, the only one of seven captains who escaped in the assault of the 10th, was among the killed on the 12th." Gen. McGowan, Confederate, says: "The trenches on the right in the bloody angle had to be cleared of the dead more than once. An oak tree twenty-two inches in diameter in rear of the brigade was cut down by musket balls and fell about 12 o'clock, Thursday night, injuring several men in the 1st South Carolina regiment." The fighting continued till after midnight. But enough of the horrible narrative. Federal loss on the 12th, 8,000.

As day succeeded day experiment after experiment was made to find some weak point in Lee's line that could be broken. But Grant, with nearly three men to one against Lee, could find none. To conceal movements from the enemy the marching was done in the night to be followed by fighting in the day. There was a long spell of rainy weather and the roads became frightful. Until May 20th Hancock, Warren and Wright led their corps either in march or in battle almost constantly. "In this contest, unparelled in its fury, and swelling to the proportions of a campaign, language is inadequate to convey an impression of the labors, fatigues and

sufferings of the troops who fought by day only to march by night, from point to point of the long line and renew the fight on the morrow. About 40,000 men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania and the exhausted army began to lose its spirit. It was with joy, therefore, that it at length turned its back upon the lines of Spottsylvania." Yes, as at the Wilderness, the Federal army, balked, defeated, exhausted, disheartened, again withdrew and again turned its back on the enemy. The army, Hancock taking the lead, started soon after dark on the 20th for the North Anna river.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. The mind is unwilling to dwell on recitals so repulsive long enough to make reflections. But if the truth must be told, Grant should immediately have been sent before a court-martial. After the Wilderness he had changed his plan to the extent of not longer regarding Lee's army as his objective point. Partisan bigotry cannot deny this, for he did turn away from Lee's army. That fact is decisive. But Richmond becomes his objective, and by the overland line. Now, why did he not move for his objective? Humphrey shows that it was easy, by more than one road, to flank Lee. The truth is he did in fact flank on the night of the 20th. Here, then, we have a general, in violation of his plan,

and unnecessarily, giving battle in which he sends thousands of men to useless slaughter. Can this wanton and terrible and ghastly crime be paralleled in history? It is time that such monstrosity of conduct were held up in plain terms to public abhorrence. Civilization, humanity itself, horror-stricken, shouts aloud execration at such butchery. Grant should not have been allowed to command an army another day.

## MILITARY MERRIMENT.

---

The North Anna is at places fordable, though barely so. About half of Grant's army, Warren being present, crossed at one ford, the other half, Hancock being present, at a ford about four miles lower down again. Grant found his "objective" without seeking him, nay, while seeking to avoid him. It is a queer "objective point" that has to be escaped from, avoided, dreaded. But in spite of Grant's planning, his plans being concealed in his own mind, and in spite of his marching under the veil of darkness, when he reached the North Anna he found Lee there. This may look like romance, but it is not. It is history. Was Frederick the Great, was Marlborough, was Napoleon ever so outwitted, ever so balked? Was any of them ever so baffled and punished in battle and after a stealthy march of escape again encountered, and after being again baffled and punished in battle, and after another stealthy escape, again encountered and all this by an army that was itself the "objective point" and would be fought if it would "stand?"

At the North Anna Grant committed a blunder

that was ludicrous. From his experience at the Wilderness and afterward at Spottsylvania he ought to have known that instead of Lee being his objective, the tables were turned. Lee had negatively coaxed him to cross the Rapidan and adopt the overland line, and now he was Lee's objective. He ought to have known that instead of his pursuing Lee, Lee was pursuing him and in his front. Hence he ought to have known that to divide his army in presence of an antagonist, so enterprising, so daring and so addicted to maneuvering, was hardly good tactics. Yet Grant crossed the Rapidan by two fords and thus divided his army into halves. Lee saw the blunder instantly. After some trifling combats he succeeded in placing his force. Being on the south side of the North Anna he disposed it in the form of the letter V, its apex resting on the river between Grant's two halves, his left wing extending in a southwesterly direction and flanked by Little river, the right wing extending in a southeasterly direction and flanked by the Hanover marshes, so that neither flank could be turned. Thus in a battle Lee could shift troops rapidly from either wing to any point hard pressed in the other wing. On the other hand, if Grant should wish to re-enforce one wing from the other, the re-enforcing detachment would have to cross to the north bank of the North Anna, barely fordable, march four miles to the other ford, recross to the south side and then march to the



point where it was needed. Grant had been taught at the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania that he was not now dealing with a Floyd, a Pemberton or a Bragg. He spent two days in peeping and doubting and querying. He saw that Lee had employed mind and had checkmated him. He confessed himself beaten and in the darkness of the night of May 26th he again turned his back upon the enemy, stealthily recrossed the North Anna and struck out for the Pamunkey. So long as military history is read this adventure will be welcome to the student for the merriment it will excite. Yet Grant's nature, if sensitive, must have smarted.

## COLD HARBOR.

---

On the morning of the 28th, the army was on the south side of the Pamunkey. But there again was Lee, and in Grant's front. In order to command as many roads as possible and thus bar Grant's march, Lee had taken position at a cross-roads called Polly Huntley's Corners. It was not more than three or four miles from Cold Harbor or Gaines' Mill, the point at which Gen. Fitz John Porter had fought like a tiger under McClellan. On the 29th, Grant and Lee had some sharp fighting near Polly Huntley's, and Grant concluded not to press further there. Meanwhile Grant's terrific losses had made it necessary for him to "rake and scrape" for more re-enforcements. He accordingly ordered one corps of Butler's command, under Gen. W. F. Smith, containing 16,000 men, to take boats, pass down the James and up the Pamunkey, and debark at the White House. Smith reached Cold Harbor during the afternoon of June 1st, and immediately, in conjunction with Wright's corps, had a sharp encounter with the enemy without marked success, but with a loss to the two corps of 2,000

men. There were other combats, one of them of considerable magnitude, but all indecisive. Grant determined to cross the Chickahominy. He ordered Hancock, then lying near Polly Huntley's, to march by night nearly to Alexander's bridge across the Chickahominy, his line to extend northward. Wright was placed next to Hancock, then came Smith with the 18th corps, then Warren, then Burnside. Lee's little army facing east, confronted Grant. Burnside's strong corps was, in military language, *en potence*, — that is, Burnside's extreme left joined Warren's extreme right, but Burnside's line bent backward, forming an obtuse angle, almost a right angle, with the general line of battle. The reason for this disposition of Burnside it is not easy to see. Where a commanding general has reason to fear specially for the safety of an extremity of his line, he accumulates troops there (hence the phrase *en potence*, in power) and finds it convenient to place them in that position. Thus at Waterloo, apprehensive that Napoleon might mass upon his right or attempt to turn it, Wellington placed a considerable force *en potence*. But Grant with the re-enforcements he had received from Washington and the strong corps under Smith, so largely outnumbered Lee that it would seem that instead of retiring Burnside's big corps he might have planned, on the contrary, to throw Burnside forward and upon Lee's flank and rear. As Grant planned to be the attack-

ing party, a strange and almost unaccountable fact is that there was no reconnoitering, no attempt of any sort to ascertain Lee's exact position or even the lay of the land between the armies and the difficulties of approach. The region was dotted with impassable swamps. Were there any swamps that Grant's troops would have to avoid? Alas, there were! Yet their location or even their existence, Grant did not attempt to ascertain. Were there in Lee's line any specially strong positions which could be avoided or any specially weak position upon which Federal troops could be massed and Lee's line cut in two? The soldiers of Grant's army were ready to die for their country, but not one was ready to die needlessly. They had a right to expect of their commander proper vigilance, proper energy, proper exercise of intellect. The authority to command carries with it the duty to command with intelligence. It is a crime, it is a crime against God and against humanity, ignorantly to order brave men to fruitless death. But no weak point was sought, no strong point was avoided, no difficulty of approach was ascertained and prepared against, no maneuver was attempted, but the tactics, or lack of tactics, that at the Wilderness had brought a loss of 15,000 men and defeat, and at Spottsylvania perhaps 20,000 men and defeat, was here repeated. A simultaneous attack along the line was ordered for 4:30 next morning.

The attack was made. "Next morning with the first gray light of dawn struggling through the clouds, the preparation began; from behind the rude parapets there was an upstarting, a springing to arms, the muffled command of officers forming the line. The attack was ordered at half past four and it may have been five minutes after that or it may have been ten minutes, but it certainly was not later than forty-five minutes past four, when the whole line was in motion and the dark hollows between the armies were lit up with the fires of death. It took hardly more than ten minutes of the figment men call time to decide the battle. There was along the whole line a rush—then a spectacle of impregnable works, a bloody loss—then a sullen falling back and the battle was decided." There were slight exceptions to the above account, but as a general and brief statement it is terribly true. During those "ten minutes of the figment men call time," more than 13,000 Federal soldiers were stretched upon the field. And this is generalship! "Tut, tut, good enough to toss. Food, food for powder, food for powder."

What will Grant now do? Richmond is his objective point. Thither he must go. But Lee forbade him to go by Polly Huntley's. It is now clear that he cannot cross the Chickakominy as a consequence of an ordinary battle. What shall he do? Probably Grant was never before in so deep distress.

Shall he abandon the overland line? Never. Had he not promised Stanton to whip Lee and capture Richmond by that line? Had he not in his Spottsylvania dispatch of May 11th declared his purpose "to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer?" Had not this great sentence been published in every administration paper in the country and with exultant applause? Had he not got from it boundless popularity and a reputation for "bull-dog tenacity?" Should he now forfeit that reputation, destroy that popularity, belie that pledge and displease Stanton. Above all, should he by abandoning the overland line and condemning his strategy and adopting the James river line, vindicate McClellan? No. More troops can be got, and what are 13,000 men in ten minutes compared with vindicating McClellan and displeasing Stanton? His mind is made up. Bull-dog tenacity prevails. He will "fight it out on this line." He orders his army to intrench. Next day he orders siege operations to be begun. He resolves by a system of regular approaches to get command of that bridge. But time brings reflection. Questions arise. Consultations are held. Even if by a siege he gets command of the bridge, what then? What will Lee be doing? May he not intrench on the opposite side? In short, it becomes apparent at last that a siege is a sheer absurdity. These were bitter days for Grant. He knew that his uninterrupted and amazing bad success from the

day he crossed the Rapidan would have damned any other general in the world, that though the frenzy of red-hot patriotism was unable to see his errors, blindness might not last always, that when 13,000 men fell in ten minutes and *without result*, a time of counting cost might come. And now to abandon his chosen line, to condemn his own strategy and so to declare that the awful sacrifice of blood at the Wilderness, Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor was pure waste and through his ignorance — this was bitter. The anguish of his humiliated spirit engages pity. But necessity is inexorable. He determines to abandon the overland line and prepares to move to James river.

To make the transfer without damage from Lee was no easy task. It would require one corps to occupy the roads leading from Richmond southward between the Chickahominy and the James, for the double purpose of feigning a threat upon Richmond and of screening from Lee the march across the country of the main army. For such a purpose the most skillful corps commander was needed. But Hancock was next the Chickahominy and so placed that any movement of troops there would be apt to challenge the enemy's notice. It was necessary, then, to take Warren. Warren's corps was skillfully withdrawn to a point two or three miles to the rear, and Burnside, always good to fill up space, took its place. There was water

transportation for one corps. An order was issued for each corps to march at dark June 12th. Smith went to the White House on the Pamunkey, took boats and returned to Bermuda Hundred. Warren in advance crossed the Chickahominy on a bridge a few miles below the Alexander bridge, and judiciously occupied the roads with a threatening aspect. The remaining corps marched to the James river, fifty-five miles, without molestation. Of course Lee discovered in the morning of June 13th that Grant had again turned his back upon him. But with such splendid skill did Warren execute his task that it can hardly be doubted that for a time Lee was uncertain whether Grant had not descended and crossed the Chickahominy and was making for Richmond.

Hancock crossed the James at Windmill Point on a pontoon bridge. A better place for building a bridge, and nearly a day's march nearer to Cold Harbor, was Malvern Hill. But Malvern Hill was the point at which McClellan had won a brilliant victory, and Grant, having just been driven to vindicate McClellan, must be pardoned if, in this hour of bitterness, he is willing to sacrifice public interests rather than give prominence to a scene of McClellan's glory.



## ASSAULT ON PETERSBURG.

---

Whether by his late distress Grant's mind had become confused and in some sense disabled, or whether he had become soured and less communicative, at any rate at the opening of his Petersburg campaign he committed a disastrous blunder. Smith, going by water, landed at Bermuda Hundred two days before the rest of the army crossed the James. He was immediately dispatched to capture Petersburg, which, at the time, had but a feeble garrison. Early in the morning of the 15th, Hancock, then being just crossed, received at Windmill Point an order to await rations. He was also ordered to proceed to a certain named point near Petersburg, the order containing no intimation that there was a battle in progress, and hence leaving Hancock to infer that it was simply the place where he was to halt for the night. He was at the same time furnished with a map for his guidance. Now, first, the rations failed to reach him but having waited till 10 a. m. he determined to push on. Secondly, the order for marching contained a mistake in the fact of naming an impossible place.

Thirdly, the map furnished him was untrue and misleading. It led him miles out of the proper route. About 5:30 p. m. he received an order from Grant, then being at City Point only six or seven miles from the point Hancock had then reached, directing him to push on to the relief of Smith who was then attacking Petersburg. A few minutes later he received a note from Smith informing him exactly where he, Smith, was. Hancock made haste, but it was dark when his command reached Smith. He proffered the use of his troops and a waiving of his own rank, as the job was Smith's. Smith thought it imprudent to attempt more in the darkness. During the night Lee filled Petersburg with troops and artillery and as a consequence, a siege lasting nearly a year and costing thousands of lives became necessary. If Hancock had been informed by the order in the morning that a battle was in progress, he would have disregarded his rations and hastened on. If the order had not contained a false direction, if instead of containing a false and misleading particularity, it had simply ordered him to Petersburg, a small town, where he would have had not a moment's difficulty in finding a corps of Federal troops, he would have taken the nearest route. He might have reached Petersburg by noon or soon after, and Petersburg would have fallen; but he knew nothing of any attack till 5:30. Meade, too, was kept in ignorance of the attack. Swinton asserts: "There

is on file in the archives of the army a paper bearing this indorsement from Gen. Meade: 'Had Gen. Hancock or myself known that Petersburg was to be attacked, Petersburg would have fallen.' "

On the 16th, Petersburg was assaulted without success. On the 18th, another assault was made which was also fruitless. On the 21st, the 2d corps, under command of Maj.-Gen. D. B. Birney (Hancock was disabled for duty by the breaking out afresh of his Gettysburg wound), and the 6th corps, Wright, were sent to the left to occupy the Jerusalem Plank Road, running southward out of Petersburg and to cut the Weldon railroad. They were badly beaten, losing 2,500 prisoners, many standards and a battery. Kautz's and Wilson's cavalry were sent out to destroy the Weldon and Southside railroad. For a time they had good success, but on his return, Wilson fell in with the enemy, was beaten and lost, besides killed and wounded, 1,000 prisoners, 13 pieces of artillery and 30 wagons and ambulances. During the first days of July the chief of artillery and the chief of engineers made an examination of the enemy's defenses. They reported to Grant that capture of the city by assault was impracticable. Grant's blunder in concealing his design on Petersburg from Meade and Hancock was inexcusable. Siege was ordered.

## SUMMARY.

Let us summarize. When Grant crossed the Rapidan he had under his personal command 140,000 men. He also placed under Butler about 40,000 as his left wing, making a total of the army marching against Richmond of 180,000 men. His own "objective," stated with emphasis, was Lee's *army*. To Butler, "Richmond is to be your objective point." To Meade, "Lee's *army* is to be your objective point. Wherever he goes you will go also." With these two objectives what did the 180,000 men effect? Did Butler effect anything? Could even a capable general, with so inadequate a force, have effected anything? His 40,000 men were simply shelved. This is strategy! He adopts the overland line. Lee, rejoiced, throws not a straw in his way in crossing. But as soon as he has crossed, "Lee's *army*," his "objective," is before him. He is compelled to abandon his chosen route and, under cover of night, turns his back on the "objective." Within fifteen miles by a longer route Lee again confronts him. The lesson taught him at the Wilderness had been wasted. He could have flanked Lee (as at last he did), but, blind, foolhardy and reckless, he gives battle. With a statement of success that was flatly false, he calls for re-enforcements. Day after day he continues the murderous work. Again he turns his back stealth-

ily on his foe, and in darkness escapes by a flank movement. At the North Anna Lee again confronts him and again he is compelled, under darkness, to turn his back on the enemy, recross the river and seek another route. Before he reaches the Chickahominy, Lee is before him, occupying Polly Huntley's. He attempts to drive Lee, but in vain. Moving a few miles southward, he determines to cross the Chickahominy further down. Lee confronts him at Cold Harbor. In ten minutes the ghastly work is done. And this is generalship! The author of this campaign is a skillful commander!

It is impossible to know with exactness the total number of killed, wounded and missing in the overland campaign, in the campaign of Butler as Grant's left wing, and in the fighting at and about Petersburg prior to July 10th, when the siege began, but the number was about 80,000. The day Grant established his headquarters at Culpeper Court-house, he could, by adopting the James river line, have occupied Petersburg without firing a shot. Here then was a useless sacrifice of 80,000 men. But that statement fails to convey the whole truth. After having wasted 80,000 men he is compelled to begin a siege lasting for months and requiring a further awful sacrifice. This is generalship!

## DESOLATION AND DEATH.

---

It is not alone by his acts on the march or in battle that a commanding general is to be judged. All exercises of the despotic authority which he holds are to be considered. The murder of the bookseller Palm and the poisoning of the prisoners of war at Jaffa by Napoleon, the devastation of the Palatinate by Wallenstein, the burning of Atlanta and Columbia by Sherman, are illustrations. Grant's character as a soldier cannot be fully understood without turning for a moment from his camp and battlefield. Lee differed from Grant in more ways than one. He differed from him in the fact that he maneuvered on the field. He also differed from him in fertility and ingenuity in strategy. He had repeatedly disturbed Grant's plans by sending troops through the Shenandoah valley to threaten Washington. At last Grant, in "the desperation of despair," resolved that if Lee weakened him by stretching 13,000 of his troops on the field in a quarter of an hour, he would weaken Lee in a mode, if not as military, at least as effective. As his cannon failed, he would try the

torch. Sheridan was one of his favorites. He directed him to march through the Shenandoah Valley, and gave him appropriate orders. Sheridan did his work well. This is what he reports: "In moving back to this point, the whole country from the Blue Ridge to the North Mountain has been made *entirely untenable* for a rebel army. I have destroyed over two thousand barns filled with wheat and hay and farming implements; over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat; have driven in front of the army over four thousand head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops not less than three thousand sheep. This destruction embraces the Luray valley and the Little Fort valley as well as the main valley." After this terrible report of efficiency Sheridan was still more a favorite. *Faciunt solitudinem, appellant pacem.*

Another question, even more serious than the laying waste a country and impoverishing non-combatants by rapine and the torch, Grant had to meet. At the beginning of the war, when the country was uninformed as to the laws and the usages of civilized warfare, there were many questions concerning the treatment of Confederate armies and Confederates taken in arms that puzzled the public mind. At last it came to be understood that a recognition of Confederate belligerency was purely military and without any political significance. Then came interchange of messages under

flags of truce, care of the wounded, burial of the dead, and other amenities of war. July 22, 1862, a cartel for the exchange of prisoners of war was executed by the belligerent parties, and exchange began at once. Afterward the exchange was interrupted. Each side had immense throngs of such prisoners. In the South the Libby prison, the Raleigh prison and the Andersonville prison were crowded. Shocking accounts were published of the horrors of Andersonville. The Confederate government was eager for exchange. Judge Ould was the Confederate commissioner for exchange of prisoners. Near the close of March, 1864, he visited Gen. Butler, Federal agent at Fortress Monroe, and had several conferences with him, and reached a basis pretty satisfactory to both. In negotiation few men were so cunning as Butler, and hence he doubtless got the advantage. Tens of thousands of aching hearts in the North, mothers, sisters, gray-haired fathers, were ready to rejoice. But Grant reached Fortress Monroe the day after Ould left. He had here the opportunity to do a great act in the interest of humanity. To end the horrors of Andersonville would mollify by so much the sufferings of war. Grant could do it. What was his action? He instructed Butler not to take another step in the matter without further orders from him. April 30th he telegraphed Butler to send no more prisoners in exchange. Such an act deserves a place in history.



## SIEGE OF PETERSBURG IN 1864.

---

As in the case of Vicksburg it is not my purpose to give a detailed account of this siege. I shall confine myself to its important features. Burnside's mine first demands attention. June 18th Warren, in the assault of that day, succeed in pushing his force up to within a hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's line. Afterward, as Warren was needed for fighting, he was withdrawn and Burnside put in his place. A portion of Burnside's command was composed of Pennsylvania miners and one of his officers had had large experience in superintending that sort of business. From him came the idea of the mine. The work was pushed on. July 30th was fixed for the explosion, which was to be followed by immediate assault. The plan was as follows: As the explosion would be expected by the Federal troops it would cause among them no confusion; but to the Confederate troops a sudden and immense uprising of the earth, unexpected, would produce terror. So it turned out. But to be successful, advantage should be taken of the confusion instantly; for, among brave men, terror is short-

lived. The duty of making the assault ought in such case to be assigned to the ablest officer commanding the best troops. But Burnside was the least able of corps commanders and his corps was the least efficient corps. Besides, the space would allow not more than a division of troops for the first work of assault. Hence the best division commander should have been selected, leading the most daring troops. Burnside's corps had four divisions of which one was composed of blacks. Such was the morale of the corps that the black division was considered the best.

The black division was, in fact, selected for the duty, but Grant flatly forbade. Then Burnside, who had an admirable facility for blundering, selected by lot, or, as Grant said, pulled straws or tossed coppers for the choice. The very poorest division, commanded by the very poorest division commander, Brig.-Gen. Ledlie, was selected. Meade seems to have taken great pains in this matter. He prepared written orders, making them unusually explicit. The mine was exploded. A large mass of earth, the powder blazing through it as if it were a volcano, burst and rose two hundred feet in the air. Not understood, it was enough to appall the stoutest heart. Instantly the Federal artillery opened. Then was the moment for a fierce assault. But everything was in confusion. Troops rushed pell-mell, officers behaved with cowardice. The crater

became filled with a confused crowd. Burnside, instead of trying to do something with the troops in the crater, ordered the black division to pass around it and assault the enemy's line. But by this time the enemy had come to understand the cause and the black troops were repulsed. Then came a massacre that was cruel and sickening. The mine was an ignoble failure. To show the state of feeling in the North, and especially the depth of Congressional learning, it is worth while to say that a Congressional committee examined into the cause of this failure, and found, as "the first and great cause of disaster," the fact that the colored troops were not selected to lead the assault! As the mine was a failure, such is public justice, poor Burnside suffered; but if it had produced the capture of Petersburg the glory would have been Grant's.

Grant determined to have possession of the Weldon railroad, a road entering Petersburg from the south. On the 18th of August he sent out Warren who in the afternoon seized the road. The enemy attacked him but he held his ground. Lee, bent on retaining the road pushed on heavy re-enforcements, and in the afternoon of the 19th Warren was again attacked fiercely. For a time the battle was doubtful, but Warren remained firm. On the morning of the 21st the enemy made a furious assault but was repulsed and then abandoned the effort. Warren's loss

during the 18th, 19th and 21st in killed, wounded and missing aggregated 4,455.

About the same time Hancock was sent to Ream's Station, a few miles below Warren, on the Weldon railroad. He was attacked by Gen. A. P. Hill, and had a sharp engagement. Hancock had only about 8,000 men and a portion of them showed cowardice. At night Hancock withdrew, but it afterward appeared that Hill also withdrew. Both sides lost heavily. Grant ordered at considerable intervals two turning movements, that is, movements further west than Lee's line of fortifications (which extended miles west and south of Petersburg) and then, in the rear of the fortifications, upon Petersburg. Both movements were failures. Warren was sent out further south upon the Weldon railroad to destroy it. He succeeded in tearing up about twenty miles and returned in safety. The approach of winter made roads impassable and caused a suspension of military operations.

It is to be observed that every one of the movements, except the two executed by Warren, were failures. It may well be doubted whether the idea of besieging Petersburg was not a wrong one. Vicksburg commanded the Mississippi and hence had to be taken in order to hold that great river. But Petersburg commanded nothing. Its strategic value was trifling. True, the Weldon and Southside railroads passed through Petersburg and they were

necessary to feed Richmond. But as Grant held the Weldon railroad, Lee could not allow him to hold the Southside railroad. If Grant had moved out his whole army a few miles to the west, then Lee would have been compelled to quit his intrenchments and give battle in the field. This might have been done in June. But the art of flanking as an aggressive maneuver, the art of flanking, except in the night, and as a result of defeat, Grant never understood.

## SIEGE OF PETERSBURG, 1865.

---

The strength of the South was about exhausted. Whatever our opinion of the righteousness of its cause, it had displayed unsurpassed valor and heroism. But it had become miserably poor. The people were suffering. Women had cut up their carpets into clothing. The table was scantily spread with only the plainest fare. Farming implements were wearing out. Horses and mules were growing scarce. Slaves, their masters being, in many cases, absent and themselves infected with notions of freedom, were becoming unreliable. Husbands and sons in the army began to wonder whether another crop would be raised. Soldiers were badly clothed. Some were without shoes. Their rations were wretched. The coarsest meat had got to be a luxury. Sometimes they had only corn in the ear. Their artillery was drawn by ropes. Cannon shot was of all shapes. The powder was weak in explosive power. Everything looked discouraging. This state of things could not last. Endurance has its limit. It is doubtless safe to say that if after Hood's destruction at Nashville, Grant had not fired another

shot, but had merely prevented Confederate armies from passing into the North, the war would have ceased within a few months.

Sherman on his march from Savannah northward was in North Carolina. Johnston, in command of a Confederate force was near Sherman. Lee saw that he could not hold Petersburg much longer. He formed the purpose to push west to Amelia Court House, on the south side of the Appomattox by the Cox road. But as Grant had heavy forces threatening that road, such a move would be perilous. He accordingly determined to attack Grant's extreme right, hoping thereby to cause Grant to withdraw the forces on his left and thus give the Confederate army safe way of escape. Lee attacked Grant's right at dawn of March 25th. At the outset the success was brilliant, but it ended in failure. It was now Grant's time for aggressive action. He determined upon another turning movement. The Southside railroad runs on the south side of the Appomattox and between that river and Lee's line of fortifications. A successful turning movement would, in the first place, bring Grant's force in the rear of Lee's line; but in the second place, it would give Grant possession of the railroad. To retain the railroad was of vital importance to Lee, inasmuch as he depended on it for daily supplies.

On the morning of March 29th, Sheridan, Warren, and Humphreys (now commanding the 2d

corps) set out on the turning movement. There was varying success. Lee opposed with all the troops he could raise. Weather favored him. The night of the 29th and all day of the 30th rain fell heavily so that that low swampy country became almost impassable and retarded aggressive action. At last, April 1st, the enemy took position at Five Forks, a point about five miles west of Lee's westerly line of fortifications and where several roads converge. The enemy faced southward. Sheridan wished to cut him off from Lee's main army and drive him westward. Hence he determined to attack most heavily on his left. That duty he assigned to Warren, who moved around and came in on his flank and rear. The enemy fought splendidly. He had thrown up temporary breastworks. At one time Warren charged these breastworks, himself leading the van and having a horse shot dead under him. Sheridan's victory was complete and brilliant, more than five thousand prisoners were captured, of whom Warren took more than three-fifths. The enemy was pursued westward till after dark. After the engagement was ended, Sheridan, for a reason which nobody can understand, relieved Warren from command. In his *Personal Memoirs* Grant says that Warren was relieved before the battle. Grant had expressly authorized Sheridan to relieve Warren.

To save Southside Railroad, Lee had so thinned his



line that it was hardly more than a picket line, and now the army, formed at such cost to his line, to hold that road, is not only beaten but is driven away from him and lost. Southside Railroad too, is lost. Immediately on news of the Five Forks victory Grant orders a bombardment all along the line and an assault to be made next morning Sunday, April 2d. The assault was successful. But there was an inner line of defenses close around the town to which Lee's forces retired, — for Lee was now fighting for time, for hours, for darkness. About 11 a. m. he telegraphed to Davis that he would abandon Petersburg that night. During the night the Confederate forces marched seventeen miles westward on the north side of the Appomattox. Next morning the Federal skirmishers found Petersburg vacant. About thirty miles west of Petersburg Lee crossed Appomattox to Amelia Court House where he had made arrangements to have provisions awaiting him. Through an unlucky misunderstanding he found none. The disappointment was terrible. Foraging then became a necessity. Lee was compelled to remain two days, the 4th and 5th, at Amelia Court House. From that time on the sufferings of the men from hunger was great. The horses, too, could get little food. To obtain brief relief from Federal annoyance, Lee recrossed the Appomattox near Farmville and fired the bridge. But Humphrey's advance came up and extinguished the flames before

much damage had been done. On the evening of the 8th Sheridan with cavalry reached Appomattox station on the Lynchburg Railroad five miles south of Appomattox Court House. Four trains of cars loaded with provisions had just arrived for Lee. Sheridan captured them and then drove back such of Lee's troops as were there to Appomattox Court House. At last Lee is caught. He has one way of escape and only one, namely by cutting his way through. He gives the order. Fighting begins. A man steps forward from his line with a flag of truce.

## THE SURRENDER.

---

All could see that the end was at hand. Though Grant was generous in any matter in which generosity was not at his expense, yet he lacked refinement, and whenever his selfishness assumed mastery, its manifestations were liable to be coarse. For example, when McClernand by his daring and skill, had made the flank movement by Vicksburg successful and had thus given Grant fame, his selfishness was so coarse that he uttered no syllable of applause or personal thanks, and even refused to speak with him after the victory of Port Gibson. In his excuse it may be urged that he regarded McClernand as a rival and enemy. But in the case now before us that excuse cannot be made. Meade was neither. Externally their relations were friendly. But in his treatment of Meade his selfishness betrays the same coarseness. On the 7th, Grant sent Lee the following communication :—

APRIL 7th, 1865.

GENERAL: The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance

on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States Army, known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT,  
Lieutenant-General.

*General R. E. Lee.*

Grant as lieutenant-general commanded all the armies. Legally Meade was commander of the Army of the Potomac exactly as before Grant reached the Culpeper Court House, exactly as Sherman and Thomas commanded their respective armies. Grant as their common superior could order either one, as he did in fact. His personal presence with Meade did not change their official relations, did not make Meade the less commander of the Army of the Potomac, subject to Grant's superior authority. Lee was, in like manner, commander of all the Southern armies. Now, if Grant as commander of all Federal armies, had desired to communicate with Lee as commander of all Confederate armies, the foregoing note would have been proper. But if Lee is to be addressed in his capacity as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, the message should come from Meade. But Grant's letter asks not the surrender of all Confederate armies,

but “of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.” The truth is Grant saw that whatever correspondence there might be respecting the surrender would become historic and, without caring for the proprieties, he determined just to take that business to himself because he had the power.

Not to speak of prior correspondence, the flag of truce caused a suspension of battle, and a meeting between Grant and Lee. After some friendly conversation they agreed orally on terms. Grant then wrote the following note incorporating the terms:—

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VA., }  
April 6th, 1865. }

GENERAL: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst. I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the United States unless properly exchanged; and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The army, artillery and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to the officials ap-

pointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side arms of the officers nor their private horses, or baggage. This done each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

U. S. GRANT,  
Lieutenant-General.

*General R. E. Lee.*

Lee accepted the terms.

Grant has received much praise for the generosity of his terms. The truth is only generous terms would at that time have been, in military policy, proper. It was certain that the end of the rebellion by organized armies was at hand. While war was waging without prospect of an immediate surrender, unconditional surrender was the right thing. Hence Grant was right at Fort Donelson and hence he was wrong at Vicksburg. But now all is changed. Military wisdom invites surrender. Other Confederate armies, seeing that Lee's army on surrender is immediately released, are encouraged to follow the example. Severity would have been wanton and would have done no good. It might have done much harm.

When Grant had finished the note above set forth, he handed it to his military secretary for correction

and corrections were made. Grant has been induced to believe that the note contains rare merit. It is amusing to observe the simple earnestness with which in his "Personal Memoirs," he relates with particularity the facts connected with its composition, assuring us that "when I put my pen to paper, I did not know the first word that I should make use of in writing the terms." It must be conceded that the note is well written. The average commission merchant, having no salaried critic at his elbow, could not write a better business note though he might make fewer errors in syntax.















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 789 508 0

